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NICK CARTER STORIES

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NICK CARTER'S PIPE LINE CASE

CUMMINGS & CLARK'S
OLD BOOK EXCHANGE,
Fisherville, — Mass.

CAUTIOUSLY RAISING THE TRAP, NICK PEERED INTO THE VACANT ROOM.

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NICK CARTER STORIES

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NICK CARTER'S PIPE-LINE CASE;

Or, RUNNING DOWN THE "REINDEER RYE."

RALPH SMITH
ROOK STREET; ROUTE 44
LAWRENCE, MASS.
GAZINES AND NOVELS
APR 2 1918
1½
CUMMINGS & CLARK'S
OLD BOOK EXCHANGE
Fisherville, Mass.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A LION AMONG WOLVES.

"Five seconds to live!"

"You ruffian——"

"Set her out, or I'll shoot!"

"But——"

"Time's up!"

RALPH F. CUMMINGS
Fisherville, Mass.

These words were followed by the sharp report of a revolver. The bullet missed the head of the man by the fraction of an inch, and smashed a dozen glasses on the shelf back of the dingy bar.

It was nearly midnight, and the place was a saloon in the city of Detroit.

It was an inferior dive very near the river, and was a favorite resort of dissolute ruffians, and often the hiding place of hard-pressed fugitives of the law.

It was run by a French Canadian named Joseph Duprée.

By his cronies, however, as well as by the police, he was better known by the name of French Joe.

He was a dark, powerful fellow, and was alone back of his bar that evening when the stranger entered.

Yet the place was not otherwise vacant. Half a dozen disdog-looking fellows were drinking at tables near the rear of the room.

The stranger who had entered was Nick Carter, on a mission soon to be disclosed.

Nick was effectively disguised, and clad like a ruffian, and he looked like as hard a ticket as any man in the place.

He entered hurriedly from the street, giving one quick backward glance as if he feared he was being shadowed.

Then he swaggered quickly to the bar, where he asked for a drink of whisky.

French Joe eyed him sharply, and then set out a bottle and glass.

It was at this moment that the scene, partly described at the opening of this story, began.

"Gimme Reindeer Rye," growled Nick, pushing back the bottle.

French Joe scowled fiercely, not liking the other's tone.

The gang at the tables started quickly when Nick asked for that particular brand of whisky.

Nick certainly appeared like a man looking for trouble.

"That's good whisky," snarled French Joe.

"Who said 'twasn't?"

"It's good enough for you."

"The best's none too good for me," retorted Nick, with an ugly nod. "Gimme Reindeer Rye!"

"I haven't got it."

"You lie! There's a bottle yonder."

"Well, you don't get it—see! You take that or nothing!"

"I'll have what I want and can pay for," roared Nick,

whipping out a revolver. "Set her out here, or you've not five seconds to live!"

"Five seconds to live!"

"But——"

"Time's up!"

Bang!

Up to this point the startling episode had not taken thirty seconds.

Nick had sent a bullet whizzing close to French Joe's ear, for he had no intention of hitting him, and aimed only to make a pronounced impression on him—and he did it, too.

Instantly the dive was in an uproar.

French Joe feared a second shot, and he ducked wildly under the bar.

To a man the gang at the tables rushed upon Nick, and blades of steel instantly flashed in the lamplight.

Both of Nick's clenched hands shot out from his shoulders.

They met two of the approaching ruffians halfway, and sent the fellows back, headlong into the arms of those behind them.

Cries of rage and half-smothered oaths sounded in the air.

"Do I get what I want?" roared Nick, fiercely flourishing his gun. "Say quick, or I'll clean out the place."

French Joe bobbed up from under the bar.

"You get it!" he yelled, looking like a jack-in-the-box. "Yes, you get it!"

Then he made a dive for the brand of whisky demanded.

The gang drew back, hesitating.

The two Nick had floored were scrambling up to renew the fight, and Nick stood as if quite ready for them.

Before the conflict could be resumed, however, another man came striding into the dive.

He wore the uniform of the local police.

But the man was Nick Carter's own associate and very able assistant, Chick Carter, and he was made up for this special occasion.

He at once rushed upon Nick, seizing him by the collar and crying sternly:

"I want you, Horrigan!"

Nick drew back with an ugly scowl.

"What d'ye want of me?" he cried.

"No matter what. You know without the telling."

"I've not done——"

"Keep that to be told in court! Shove your hands into these."

"I'll not have them things put onto me!" yelled Nick.

"You'll not, eh? We'll see!"

And with a sharp clicking sound, Chick snapped a pair of handcuffs around Nick's wrists.

"Now, Horrigan, you come with me," he sternly commanded. "And come quietly, too, or you'll taste the quality of my nightstick."

This quickly enacted scene had silenced the several observers.

The two men Nick had struck had taken alarm, and had darted out of the place and vanished in the darkness.

But four others remained, together with French Joe, who now stood quite aghast behind his bar.

This apparent arrest of Nick was not without effect upon the gang, and precisely the effect Nick intended, for the arrest presented Nick in a different light.

The gang began to figure that he was one of their own class, and already regretted his arrest, and a word of appeal from Nick would have brought them to his assistance.

Chick saw this, and he cried sternly:

"Fall back, you fellows! You meddle here, and you'll invite a bullet."

"What's the covey done?" snarled one.

"None of your business. Fall back, I say."

"Fall back yourself!"

The last came from Nick, with a terrific growl.

He seemed to have taken his cue from the more friendly attitude of the gang.

With a swift upward move of his manacled hands he deftly knocked off Chick's helmet, then apparently brought the steel bracelets down with crushing force upon Chick's skull.

The blow was only a cleverly executed bluff, however.

Yet a gush of red fluid instantly covered Chick's brow and face, and he staggered and fell to the barroom floor, like one stricken dead.

Cries of dismay broke from the gang, and French Joe started from behind the bar.

With what appeared to be superhuman strength, Nick fiercely wrenched at the bracelets, until, with a sharp snap, he parted the chain that joined them. They had been prepared for just this purpose.

Then he caught up Chick around the body, and quickly dropped him out on the gloomy sidewalk.

Darting back into the dive, he closed the door and locked it, finding the key inside the lock.

He again was alone in the dive, with French Joe and the four ruffians who had remained.

They appeared dazed by the rapid succession of incidents, for the entire scene had passed in less than three minutes.

Nick gave them no time to consider what ought to be done.

"Yank down that curtain," he fiercely commanded. "And douse those lights."

French Joe hesitated.

He didn't fancy bucking against the police, in case one had been killed.

"Who's running this place?" he snarled viciously.

"I am just now, you infernal frog-eating Frenchman!" answered Nick, with a great display of passion.

"But——"

"Shut up! If you'd given me what I wanted, I'd have had my drink and been out and away, and not got cornered here by that cursed bluecoat. Now you've got to see me out of the scrape. I want to escape."

"That's right enough, Frenchy!" cried one of the gang. "We'd ought to lend him a hand."

"Good for you, mate!" nodded Nick.

"Sure we had!" exclaimed another. "Mebbe we'll be in the same box some day."

"Run him out the back way, Frenchy," cried a third.

They all were willing enough for a crook to escape a cop.

Nick's nerve and prowess, moreover, had made a deep impression on them; and now it suddenly occurred to French Joe that so strong and desperate a fellow might be found very useful in his own gang.

"Pardieu!" he exclaimed, glancing at the irons on Nick's wrists. "You may be right, boys."

"Sure we are."

"Slip out the side door, Haley, and pipe the copper on the sidewalk," cried Joe. "Watch what he does, and where he goes."

Haley darted through a back room, and disappeared into a side alley.

French Joe ran back to the bar again, and drew down a curtain at the window.

"Douse the lights, some of you," he cried. "We may have half the force down on us soon."

"What of it?" growled Nick sharply.

"They'll make a hunt for you."

"Not by a long chalk!"

"Why not?"

"Tell 'em I cleared out after downing the copper, and that you then shut up the joint," Nick hurriedly suggested. "Then they'll turn to hunting for me outside."

"There's something in that," cried Joe, again impressed with Nick's ready wit.

"It'll work, Frenchy. And all I want is to give 'em the slip."

"We'll help you, pard!" cried the others.

Meantime all the curtains had been drawn down and the lamps put out.

From outside the place appeared to have been closed up for the night, yet a lamp still burned feebly in the back room.

Thither French Joe now led the way, with Nick and the gang following.

The door was quickly opened behind them, and the barroom itself was left in total darkness.

CHAPTER II.

THE SECRET CELLAR.

The case Nick Carter then was on was of great importance.

It involved the illegal manufacture and sale of vast quantities of a superior whisky, and the gigantic enterprise was defrauding the government of thousands of dollars daily.

The revenue secret-service officers had exhausted all of their resources, and been driven to their wits' end, in vain efforts to detect the criminals and discover the seat of the fraud.

Who were the distillers?

Where was their plant located?

By whom were the goods handled and distributed?

These were questions the revenue officers had for weeks been vainly trying to answer.

Finally Nick Carter was appealed to, and consented to accept the case, going at it with all his wonderful energy and skill.

From the head of the revenue department in Washington, Nick got points which led him to believe that in Chicago or Detroit he should find some clew to the moonshiners.

With Chick and Patsy, his two most reliable assistants, Nick hastened to Chicago, where for nine days they secretly conducted a most careful investigation.

There they secured a mere thread of a clew, so slight that it had entirely escaped the revenue officers, yet which vaguely indicated that the base of the illicit operations was located in or near the city of Detroit.

To Detroit went Nick and his assistants.

There ten more days were given to the work, and their efforts were not wasted.

Nick finally discovered that large quantities of a certain brand of whisky, called Reindeer Rye, were being sold throughout the country.

It was handled exclusively by the firm of Mason & Duff, wholesalers, having headquarters in Detroit, and a branch house in Chicago.

Yet the business of Mason & Duff appeared to be all aboveboard.

They were rated high both by Bradstreet and Dun, and their integrity was not questioned.

But Nick, with the help of Chick and Patsy, soon decided that there was being much more Reindeer Rye sold than duties were being paid upon.

But where was the still, and who were doing the moonshine work?

And how was Mason & Duff getting hold of the goods, to label, bottle, and distribute them?

These were questions not easily answered.

The three detectives worked day and night on the case. They watched every line of railway entering the

city, the ferries, and every suspicious boat and barge upon the Detroit River, and shadowed every dray and caravan that visited Mason & Duff's elaborate main office, or approached their huge stone storehouse down near the river.

Yet not another clew could Nick discover, tending to incriminate these wholesalers of Reindeer Rye, for he was unable to uncover anything that would prove their entire business was not on the level.

Yet Nick clung persistently to the single thread he had unearthed.

Carefully concealing his suspicions, he called on the firm one day and had a talk with them.

They had heard of the disturbance in the revenue department, and that Nick had been engaged on the case; and both members of the firm very heartily volunteered to do anything in their power to aid him.

They appeared so willing, however, that Nick's suspicion was increased.

He carefully concealed the fact, however.

When he left their office that morning, he discovered that he was being shadowed by a dark, powerful fellow, who had been loitering outside.

Nick easily evaded him, then turned shadow himself.

He tracked the man to a saloon near the river, and learned that his name was Joseph Dupree. Also that he ran the saloon mentioned.

It was within a rod or two of Mason & Duff's big stone storehouse, with only an old rag and junk shop between them.

Nick put this and that together, and made a second call on Mason & Duff.

This was on the following day, and late in the afternoon.

Again Nick carefully concealed his deeper suspicions, but disclosed the fact that he distrusted a saloon keeper named Dupree, and that he that night was going to work a scheme to get acquainted with him, and also become one of the gang that hung around his place.

Nick confided his whole scheme to Mason & Duff, and he had a double object in so doing.

First, he wished to see if they would betray any fears upon hearing that Dupree was suspected. This they did did not do, however, but rather appeared to encourage the detective's design.

Second, Nick wished to learn whether or not they would betray him to Dupree; and that side of the affair was not revealed until later.

That evening Nick entered French Joe's place in the manner described, and with the results thus far depicted.

Nick already had decided that neither Duff nor Mason had yet betrayed him.

As he accompanied French Joe and the gang to the back room, Haley returned from the street.

"He's gone!" he exclaimed, closing and locking the alley door.

"Gone?" inquired Joe.

"Yes, sure thing," nodded Haley. "He got up, dazed-like, and staggered down the street."

"Toward the river?"

"Yes. He didn't seem to know where he was heading."

"Bats in his belfry!" growled Nick grimly. "It'll teach him not to try putting the bangles on me."

Chick had, of course, carefully followed Nick's earlier instructions.

Nick now wished to be left alone with the gang, and he shrewdly had suspected that Chick might be watched after their introductory episode.

"You gave him a good swat, right enough," said Haley admiringly. "Where'd you learn that trick?"

"Knocking off his helmet?"

"Yes, and then dropping him so quickly."

Nick indulged in an evil grin.

"Gents in my biz," said he, "has to be wise to those tricks."

"'Twon't do to stay here," put in the Canadian. "In case the copper returns, the light can be seen from the alley. Bring the lamp upstairs."

"Why don't you let me out the back way?" growled Nick, as if anxious to make his escape.

He knew the suggestion would have the effect intended.

It convinced the gang that he had no designs upon any of them.

"Because I want to talk a bit to you," replied French Joe significantly.

"That so?"

"You might do worse than stay here. Bring up the lamp."

Then Nick climbed a back stairway with them, and entered an inner room on the second floor. It had no window from which the light could be seen from outside, and it contained only a deal table and several common wooden chairs.

"Our private office," explained French Joe, closing the door.

"It looks all right," nodded Nick.

"It's safe enough," grinned Haley.

Then they all took chairs around the table, upon which French Joe set out a bottle and some glasses.

"That's Reindeer Rye," said he, with a grim smile at Nick. "The next time you want it in my place, ask without pulling a gun."

"You know why I was in a hurry," replied Nick. "Now I'm sorry I did it, since you're using me on the square."

"It's all right then, pal," cried French Joe, accepting the apology. "We'll let it drop, and have a bit of a talk. For what was the copper after you?"

Nick pretended to be doubtful.

"I might not get fat telling you all about——"

"Oh, you needn't fear us," interrupted the Canadian. "We've no love for the cops, or we'd not be so ready to do you a turn. We'll not give you away."

"In that case, Joe, I'll tell you."

"Out with it."

"I'm wanted for a robbery up in Bay City."

"Oh, I see!" cried Haley. "You're not Neil Horrigan, are you?"

"Aye, that's my name."

Nick knew Neil Horrigan to have been the criminal in the recent burglary mentioned.

He knew, too, that Horrigan was still at large, and that none of this gang was likely to be personally acquainted with him. In event even of that, Nick had made himself up to resemble Horrigan, whom he knew well.

"I might 'a' known it," cried Haley. "I heard that fly cop speak your name. I've read all about cracking the crib in the papers. You're the only one who got away."

"That's right, Haley."

"Did you bring off any dough?"

"A good bit, enough to pay for the job," replied Nick. "I've got it planted till I can give the fly coppers the slip. Just now I'm trying to get across into Canada."

French Joe had listened with added interest.

"Canada, eh?" said he.

"Aye," nodded Nick. "But I've been hard pushed for two days back. I'd have swum the Detroit River tonight, only for this scrape. I wanted a drink to keep my blood stirring while I was in the water, so ran in here to get it. That's how it happened I was a bit mad at not getting what I wanted."

"Well, we'll let that drop, Horrigan," said French Joe, in a friendly way.

"Dropped it is, Joe."

"I've got an offer to make you."

"The best you can do for me is to get me over the river."

"No, 'tisn't."

"What d'ye mean?"

"You might get nabbed after getting over there. Wouldn't it be better if you could lay low in safety for a month or two?"

"Sure it would," cried Nick eagerly. "But that's not easy. The fly coppers are too close on my track."

"We can make it easy for you, Horrigan," said French Joe pointedly.

"You can?"

"Yes."

"And will?"

"We must have something in return."

"Part of my plunder, eh?" frowned Nick

"No, we want none of your plunder. We have a way of making easy money ourselves, Horrigan, and with less risk than you take in cracking cribs," said the Canadian grimly.

Nick felt quite sure that they had, and he was there to discover their method.

"Less risk, eh?" he replied.

"Much less, Horrigan," nodded French Joe. "But we're going slow just now, for we've been tipped that the Carters have been employed to ferret out our game. We'll fool 'em, though."

"Nick Carter?" inquired Nick, without a change of countenance.

"Yes."

"You'd better look out for him."

"We don't need that advice. You can bet he'll be sent down and out if he comes our way. We'd kill him at sight, sooner'n have him get wise to our game and queer it."

Nick nodded approvingly.

"That's the stuff," said he. "Kill him by all means. What's the game?"

"Never you mind," cried Haley.

"We'll not tell you yet," added French Joe.

"Suit yourselves. But you say you can hide me from the police?"

"Dead easy."

"And what do you want in return?"

"Only some work out of you," replied Joe. "We have to handle some pretty heavy goods, and can use a man of your strength."

"That all?"

"That's all, Horrigan."

"And you'll keep me under cover while I'm working for you?"

"As safe as if you were at the north pole."

"That's good enough for me, Frenchy," cried Nick, suspecting that he would be taken to their plant. "I'll do what you tell me."

French Joe turned to the others.

"What do you say, boys?" he demanded.

"I reckon it's all right," said one.

"The big fingers can't kick at it," added Haley. "They know we need a man badly enough, and where'd you find one to fit the job any better? He'll not dare squeal."

"I'm not the kind that squeals," growled Nick sharply.

"It's plain you're not," put in the Canadian. "And mebbe you'll strike a better job than cracking cribs."

"Mebbe!" said Nick sententiously.

"And now we'll get you safe under cover," said Joe, rising. "'Twon't do for you to stay under my roof any longer. If the cop you hit comes around, a squad of 'em may be down here with a search warrant."

"Where do I go?" inquired Nick. "I may get nabbed if I leave the house."

"You'll not leave it," said the Canadian bluntly. "We'll show you."

"Some secret passage," said Nick to himself. "I'll at least locate that."

"Bring down the lamp, Haley!" commanded Joe. "We'll go down through the back room. Come on, Horrigan."

Nick promptly arose and followed.

One of the steel bracelets still was fastened to each wrist.

He looked, in fact, the most desperate ruffian of the lot.

Not a word was spoken while they softly descended the stairs, and again reached the back room.

There French Joe listened intently at the alley door.

"I reckon it's all right, boys," he whispered. "Throw the trap, Fagan."

At this command one of the gang, a red-haired fellow of twenty, went into a closet and pressed a button hidden in the woodwork.

Instantly a portion of the dingy floor of the room was sprung from place, and Haley reached down and threw it open. It was a cleverly concealed trap, working on hidden hinges, and could not be detected when closed.

It was about three feet square, and gave access to a flight of stairs leading into a cellar, or some subterranean cavern.

The excavation was as dark as a stormy sky at midnight.

"Light the way, Haley," growled French Joe softly. "We'll all follow."

"Say!" observed Nick admiringly. "That trap's a corker. It can't even be seen when shut."

"We don't want it seen," grinned Joe.

"And it works mighty slick."

"We throw it with a hidden spring."

"It's a jim dandy, sure! Can you open it from below?"

"Easy. There's a lever at the side of the top stair."

"Sure thing! I see it, now. Goes down cellar, eh?"

"Not exactly," grinned French Joe, evidently pleased with Nick's admiration of the contrivance. "My cellar's out front, under the barroom. This here's a blind cellar, and you'll soon see what we use it for. Come on."

Nick had not asked the several questions without an object, for well did he know that he was going into a place from which he might wish to get out in a hurry.

Yet he did not dream how quickly the emergency would arise.

CHAPTER III.

WARM WORK.

Haley and the rest of the gang, except French Joe, already had passed through the trap and descended the stairs.

The latter signed for Nick to follow them, and the detective promptly did as he was requested, and quickly reached the earth floor of the excavation.

By the feeble rays of the lamp in Haley's hand, Nick glanced curiously about.

Three sides of the place appeared to be of solid stone masonry.

The fourth, that adjoining the front cellar, was masked with a lot of liquor casks, piled upon each other, and evidently empty.

As well as eye could discern, there was no exit from the place except by the stairway and trap, or by removing the casks that walled off the front cellar.

Yet Nick was convinced that some other exit existed. French Joe's remark about getting him out of the house indicated some secret passage.

But where was it? whither did it lead? and for what was it used?

As he asked himself these questions, Nick heard the Canadian start to come down.

"I shall soon learn," he complacently decided.

The thought had scarcely passed through his mind when there came a sharp knocking on the back-room door, that leading to the alley.

"Hist! Quiet!" whispered French Joe, peering down the stairs.

Then like a flash he sprang softly back into the room, and quietly closed the trap.

"What's the row?" growled Nick, hoping there was to be no serious interruption.

"Somebody at the side door," whispered Haley. "Keep still."

"Mebbe it's the cops," muttered Fagan.

"Shut up! We're safe enough here, you fool, if you keep quiet."

Nick listened intently, and vainly, for a sound from above. The closing of the trap shut out any ordinary noise.

In the gloom of the back room French Joe stole to the alley door and listened.

Presently the knocking was repeated.

First two raps, then one, then two again, was the manner in which they were given.

It was a signal, and the Canadian stooped and whispered sharply through the keyhole.

"Who's there?"

"Is that you, Frenchy?"

The question, also whispered, came from the alley.

"Yes."

"Open up! It's all right. I want a word with you."

French Joe opened the door a few inches, and peered out.

"*Pardieu!*" he quickly muttered, as if startled. "You here, Mr. Duff!"

A large, broad-shouldered man, with his overcoat

muffled up about his ears, was standing in the gloom of the alley.

"Hush!" he hissed commandingly. "Don't speak my name again!"

"Sure not, sir. What sent you here?"

"To warn you, and I should have been here long ago," Duff hurriedly whispered, with vicious intensity. "An accident on the river delayed me till now. Have you had any trouble here to-night?"

"Trouble?"

"A fight? A cop? A ruffian, who——"

"By Heaven, yes!"

French Joe already began to smell a rat.

Duff evidently was greatly disturbed, and he had reason to be.

"Where is the ruffian now?" Mr. Duff demanded.

"In the trap cellar. He's a crook, who——"

"Crook nothing!" hissed Duff, with terrible ferocity. "The man is Nick Carter, the detective."

French Joe caught his breath with a gasp.

"The devil!"

"He'll raise the devil for us, all right."

"What sent him here in this way?"

"It's a trick by which to discover our game. I knew it was coming off, and I tried to get word to you earlier, so's to have you ready for him. The accident delayed me. I can't delay to explain about that. Have you betrayed anything to Carter?"

"Only the trap cellar."

"That's bad enough!"

"*Sacré!* I should say so."

"He must be done up, put out of the way," hissed Duff fiercely. "He'll do us, Frenchy, if we don't do him."

"It can be done easy enough," whispered the Canadian, with villainous readiness.

"In the trap cellar?"

"Yes."

"Who's there with him now?"

"Haley, Fagan, Gill, and Royce," said Joe hurriedly. "Counting me there will be five against him. We can turn him down dead sure."

"It must be done. Our situation demands it."

"Is it so bad?"

"Worse than I now can tell you. Our whole game may be discovered if Nick Carter escaped you this night."

"He'll not escape, then," growled the burly Canadian, with an oath.

"Lest he should," cried Duff, scarce above his breath; "there's one thing more."

"What's that?"

"Don't mention my name, nor betray that you know him to be Nick Carter."

"Why's that?"

"Because he put me wise to what he was going to do here," Duff hurriedly explained. "If he finds that he has been betrayed, and that you know him, he will at once suspect Mason or myself. It would not matter, providing you kill him. But if he should escape you, it would raise the very devil."

"*Pardieu!* I see it, too. I'll look out for that."

"Do him if possible, and without letting him know why. Give the boys a secret tip that he's a spy. And don't come to my office again before I tell you you may. It's no longer safe. These Carters are pressing us closer than appears on the surface, I'm dead sure of that."

"There'll soon be one less of 'em! *Pardieu!* you have my word for that."

"Make sure of it! Slip across the river to-morrow night, and I'll explain then all. Don't delay here longer. Do Carter to-night at any cost."

"And see you over the river to-morrow?"

"Without fail."

"I'll be there at dark."

"Don't fail to do this job!"

"Trust me, Mr.——"

"Silence!"

"Right! *Pardieu*—trust me!"

This whispered intercourse had been very hurriedly conducted, and the junior member of the firm of Mason & Duff now quickly glided away through the darkness.

That he could thus betray Nick Carter and at the same time take the above precautions against his possible escape, indicated that Duff was both a man of unusual craft and discernment, and a knave of no ordinary degree.

French Joe softly closed and secured the door.

In the gloom of the back room he paused to put his revolver in one of the side pockets of his sack coat. Then, entering the closet, he pressed the button that threw the trap.

"It's all right, boys," he cried softly, as he prepared to descend the stairs and rejoin his confederates.

He could have shot Nick from the head of the stairs, only he feared the report of his revolver might be heard outside.

He wished to get into the cellar, with the trap closed to deaden the sound, before a shot should be fired.

Nick watched him as he came down.

The shrewd detective already suspected what had occurred, knowing that Mason and Duff were informed of his designs that night.

He could not quite understand, however, why a betrayal had been so long withheld, and this led him to think he might be wrong in suspecting it.

So he carefully concealed his misgivings, lest he should ruin all by rousing the distrust of the gang.

Nevertheless he had anticipated trouble, and furtively had measured the possibilities of the desperate situation.

"Who was there?" asked Haley, while French Joe was closing the trap.

"Two river rats," growled the Canadian, crouching on the stairs. "They were half drunk, and wanted me to let 'em in to get more booze. I had all I could do to get rid of 'em."

"I should say so by the time it took."

"I didn't want any bother, so I got 'em a flask from the bar."

"I see."

While listening to this explanation, Nick's keen eyes had watched French Joe's every movement. And they suddenly discovered something.

It was the butt of Joe's revolver, protruding the least bit from his side pocket.

Nick knew the weapon was not in that pocket before, for the coat had hung loose and lax.

It told Nick the whole story.

He now was convinced that he had been betrayed, and that a further move to learn the secrets of this gang was then useless.

"It has come down to a different kind of a play," he coolly said to himself. "I will have to make a desperate bid to get out of here alive."

With a deft movement, Nick drew his revolver and held it concealed beside his thigh.

Haley raised the lamp a little to light the Canadian down the stairs.

Fagan and the other two ruffians stood right in line with the row of heavy casks, which were piled sidewise in tiers one above the other, and blocked with a stick of joist under the end of the lower row to prevent their rolling.

Nick already had noticed these casks, and how they were piled and blocked in place.

He had decided what to do, moreover, having no wish to arrest the gang at this stage of his investigations

Nick wanted the whole truth or nothing.

As French Joe came down the stairs, he made a secret sign to Haley and the others.

Nick saw the quick change that showed in their faces, for the startled eyes of each man were instantly turned upon him.

"It's coming!" he said to himself.

Then he drew back a step, and curtly demanded:

"What in thunder are you duffers looking at?"

French Joe answered him with a roar.

"Nail him, boys! Down him with a bullet!"

As quick as a flash Nick raised his weapon and fired.

The bullet went straight to the mark intended.

It smashed to smithereens the lamp in Haley's hand, and sent the glass flying in all directions.

Instantly the trap cellar was enveloped in Egyptian darkness.

Then followed a scene that scarce can be described.

Bang! Bang!

Both Fagan and French Joe fired together.

The brief flame from their revolvers was like a miniature lightning flash in the gloom, and the combined reports in the narrow confines of the place was more terrific than thunder.

But Nick Carter, the instant he fired, had ducked and leaped to one side.

The two bullets crashed against the stone wall behind him.

Then, with a bound through the darkness, Nick reached the pile of casks, and with a single kick he displaced the joist under the end one.

Then he gave the pile a push and started them rolling.

They came down with a rumble and crash against Fagan, Gill, and Royce, hurling them back and crowding them against the side wall.

All three of them began to yell and struggle.

French Joe was thundering his commands to seize the stranger, and Haley was thrashing about the place like a wild man in search of him.

The terrific noise they made betrayed their location.

Nick knew enough to keep quiet, and yet he realized, too, that delay was dangerous.

Darting across the cellar, he got Haley round the body, and the latter yelled wildly:

"I've got him! Joe, Joe, I've got him!"

The boot was on the other leg, however, and it was the ruffian's last yell that night.

Nick raised him bodily and hurled him with a crash against the side wall, leaving him stunned and bleeding upon the earth floor.

Then the detective made a rush for the trapdoor, where he encountered the Canadian at the foot of the stairs, and with a single blow doubled him up like a jackknife, then hurled him headlong among the rolling casks.

All the while the tumult in the gloomy place was utterly indescribable.

But Nick now had a clear way up the stairs, and he mounted them like a cat, and quickly found the lever that threw the trapdoor.

Instantly raising the latter, he sprang up into the back room and made for the alley door.

Five seconds later he emerged safely to the city street, and, with scarce a backward glance, he walked briskly away to his hotel.

CHAPTER IV.

COUNTER GAMES.

It was one o'clock when Nick reached the hotel, and he found Chick and Patsy just preparing for bed.

After what they knew had taken place at the saloon, both were surprised to see him return at that time.

"Sure, sir," cried Patsy, who was having a smoke, "we thought you were well in with that river-front push by this time."

"I was well in with them for a time, Patsy, and now I'm well out from them," replied Nick, laughing.

"I see you got out with a whole skin," grinned Patsy.

"Yes, but no fault of theirs," smiled Nick. "They'd have made holes in it for me, had I let them."

"Then they were put wise to you?" cried Chick, inquiringly.

"No doubt of it, Chick."

"I shadowed the place for a time, Nick, as soon as I could change my police make-up. When you did not come out, and there seemed to be no trouble inside, I inferred that Mason & Duff had not betrayed you, and that your game was going all right. So I came away for the night."

"Quite right, and just as I instructed," nodded Nick. "But one of that firm certainly gave me away, although I don't just see why he was so late in doing it. Probably there was some good reason for the delay."

Then, while removing his disguise and enjoying a cigar, Nick imparted the details of his experience and observations in French Joe's dive.

"Gee whiz, sir!" laughed Patsy, at the conclusion. "You made a Garrison finish for them, and no mistake. I'd given up a little of my large income to have seen that scrap in the cellar."

"You'd have needed a cat's eyes," chuckled Nick, "for it was as dark there as in a negro's pocket."

"We certainly appear to be on the right track, Nick," observed Chick.

"I now am convinced of it," said Nick decisively.

"Did you discover any secret passage in the trap cellar?"

"No, I hadn't time," smiled Nick. "But I am sure that one exists."

"Got any idea regarding it?"

"Yes, Chick, I have. I believe it runs underground between that cellar and the cellar of Mason & Duff's big stone storehouse.

"By Jove, that may be so! The buildings are but a short distance apart."

"I further believe that French Joe and his gang are employed by this firm, and that Mason and Duff are a brace of scoundrels. They would find such a subterranean passage very handy in an emergency, and may have uses for it yet to be discovered."

"True, Nick," nodded Chick. "Shall you call down Mason and Duff for betraying you?"

"By no means."

"Why not?"

"Because, now that I am thoroughly convinced of their guilt, and that they are the heads of a gang operating probably the very game that we are trying to run down, I don't wish them to think I suspect them so strongly. I want to relieve them of their fears, so that they will continue their work."

"For our special benefit, sir," put in Patsy, with a grin.

"Precisely," laughed Nick. "To-morrow I shall call again on Mason & Duff, and give them a bluff that I made a complete failure of my design to-night."

"And will you make no search for the secret passage?"

"Only one on the quiet, Chick. I shall let them think that I don't suspect that such a passage exists. That will relieve French Joe, also, and they may continue their illicit work."

"And we'll continue ours, too," laughed Patsy.

"Exactly. After my call on the firm we will determine our next move."

Nick made the call quite early next morning, and found both Mason and Duff in their private office.

They already had been informed of Nick's escape, and were expecting to see him, yet both looked a little disturbed when he entered.

Nick's first words, however, were designed to relieve them.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, with a laugh; "I had my trouble for nothing. I am feeling a bit sheepish this morning."

Duff was a large, powerful man of forty, with a forceful face, and a heavy, resonant voice.

Mason, on the contrary, was a small, slight man of nearly sixty, with a thin, wizened face, sharp gray eyes, and a long, hooked nose. He looked like a bird of prey, and he was like one in character, too.

They were opening their mail when Nick entered, and both pretended they did not understand to what he referred.

"Sheepish, Mr. Carter?" said Duff inquiringly.

Yet he had a deucedly evil light in his lifted eyes.

"Yes, sheepish," replied Nick, taking a chair. "Sheepish over a scheme I told you I was going to attempt in that Canadian's saloon last night."

"Oh, yes! oh, yes!" both exclaimed, with a great display of recalling the matter.

"You went there and tried it, then, did you?" added Duff, with affected innocence.

"Yes, I tried it," laughed Nick dubiously, "and I got it where a giraffe has a sore throat."

"In the neck, eh?" grinned Duff.

"Rather!"

"Did they get onto you?"

"No, not exactly that, Mr. Duff," explained Nick, with conventional suavity. "They evidently had no idea that I was Nick Carter, yet they took a scare for some reason I cannot fathom, and suddenly started in to do me up."

"Do you up!" exclaimed Mason, with lifted hands. "How shocking! Dear me, how very shocking!"

"It would have been shocking enough for me had they succeeded," smiled Nick grimly. "I thought I was getting in fairly well with them, for they swallowed the bluff I gave them, and then took me down cellar to hide me

there from the police. But all of a sudden they started in to down me, so I had to put up a quick fight and light out."

"Dreadful! dreadful! Did you escape from them safely?"

"Yes, Mr. Mason, fortunately," bowed Nick, "I sent a bullet through the only lamp in the place, and managed, in the darkness, to evade them and reach the street."

"Miraculous! miraculous!" murmured Mason, with a great show of admiration.

"So your scheme was a failure, eh?" inquired Duff.

"Very much a failure. And that's why I feel sheepish."

"Too bad, I'm sure."

"Yes, for I had built some hopes upon it," continued Nick. "I still think the gang down there are up to some kind of crooked work, but I don't feel so sure, now, that it has any connection with the case I am on."

"The whisky case?"

"Yes. As things now stand, I hardly think it will be worth while to bother with them further."

"What do you intend doing?"

"I guess I shall have to begin all over, and hunt up other clews," said Nick, smiling dubiously. "I dropped in here, thinking you might possibly have something new to offer."

"I can't think of anything," said Duff, quite curtly. "Can you, Mason?"

"Eh—me? No, not a thing! Pardon. I was busy over this letter. It's from our Chicago manager, Duff, and he states that the brandy shipped to——"

"Excuse me, gentlemen!" interposed Nick, rising. "I see that I am encroaching on valuable time. I will bid you good morning, and will call again when I have anything important to disclose."

"Do so, Carter! Do so by all means," cried Duff, nodding with a malicious smile. "Good day to you."

"Good day, gentlemen," replied Nick, bowing himself out.

The moment he was gone, however, Mason turned to Duff and snarled viciously:

"That was a bluff, an infernal bluff!"

"Humph! of course it was."

"I'm sure of it."

"He knows we gave him away to French Joe, all right. No one else could have done it."

"We must get him!" hissed Mason sharply. "We must silence him and his helpers. It's them or us, Duff; it's them or us."

"Well, it shall not be us, I give you my word to that," Duff vehemently answered. "You leave him and his helpers to Wilkins Duff. You leave them to me, I say. I'm glad he has called here the way he has, for it exposes his game. I'll trap him next time, both him and his helpers, and I'll be on hand myself to settle their hash. He'll have a different man than French Joe to fool with, when he tackles Wilkins Duff. You leave them to me, I say!"

Mason rubbed his bony hands together with malicious satisfaction, and wheezily demanded:

"What's your idea, Wilkie? What's your plan? God grant it's a good one, a good and sure one."

"Oh, it will be, never you fear."

"Only think how dreadful, Wilkie, to lose the snap we now have. And all through these infernal Carters!"

"We'll not lose it, I tell you."

"And to be jailed, maybe, like common——"

"Oh, dry up, Mason," Duff harshly interrupted. "You're as evil and crafty a knave as ever stood in leather, but you're the worst fellow for abject whining that ever I saw. You've got only one good quality."

"What's that, Wilkie?"

"If driven to it, you will fight like a cornered wild cat," said Duff bluntly. "That's at least to your credit."

"Thanks, Wilkie," grinned Mason, with evil glee.

"And, furthermore, you may yet be compelled to do a little of that sort of fighting," added Duff pointedly. "Listen, and I'll tell you my plan."

"Eh! good!"

"Draw up your chair."

"I'm all ears, Wilkie. Anything to do these Carters! As I said, my dear Duff, it's them or us."

Duff had swung round in his chair, grim, frowning, and viciously determined.

"It shall be them, all right," said he. "We have a lot of empty casks in the cellar, haven't we, that may be transferred to our storehouse?"

"Yes, about twenty."

"Very good. That will give me a good excuse for going down there, also."

"A good excuse?"

"In case I am being watched, as I think is quite likely."

"Ah, yes, I see! But what is your mission at the storehouse?"

"To have an interview with French Joe, without bringing him up here," said Duff. "These Carters probably are shadowing him by this time, and it will not do for him to be seen with either of us. I wish Carter to think that we have swallowed his story of this morning."

"I see, Wilkie."

"I want him to work us precisely as if we did believe it. And then, by Heaven, I'll draw him and his helpers into a trap from which there shall be no escape."

"Good!"

"You leave the infernal meddlers to me, I say! You leave them to Wilkins Duff. I'll land them for sure, flat on their backs. And there they'll stay, with wooden overcoats around them."

Mason wriggled gleefully in his great leather chair.

"When will you go down to the storehouse, Wilkie?" he asked eagerly.

"After we have finished the mail. We'll look over the rest of the letters, and then I'll see if I can get a dray to move the casks."

"But what's your plan, Wilkie? What's your plan?"

"Listen. I'll tell you."

Return this circular with your order or mention mailed by
RALPH SMITH, 3 Brook St., R. 44 Lawrence, Mass.

CHAPTER V.

A LOAD OF CASKS.

Nick Carter's rare ability to read faces served him well that morning, for he had very quickly seen that neither Mason nor Duff believed the story he was telling them, hence his early and very polite departure, in which he had an object.

He had observed while there that the private office occupied an inner room among the several elaborate general offices, and that in the rear wall of it was a large ground-glass window.

"That window must open upon some corridor, or entry," Nick said to himself, as he departed. "I'll see if I can find it."

He found it very easily. He had only to walk around the inclosed offices, as if intending to depart by a rear door of the building, and he quickly discovered a narrow entry making to a room some yards distant. A glance showed Nick the ground-glass window, which was closed, also that the room to which the entry led was vacant.

"I'll take a chance of being discovered," he said to himself.

Then he stole cautiously to the window and listened.

He could not hear plainly, yet much that was said by Duff reached his attentive ears.

He heard them deride his story, heard them speak about the dray, and their vicious intention to do him by some plan; but when explaining the latter, Duff dropped his voice so low that Nick could not hear him.

The clever detective had heard quite enough, however, and he quickly decided what to do.

"A dray, eh?" he said to himself. "You shall have a dray to move those casks, gentlemen, if I have to buy one for you!"

Making his departure unobserved, Nick quickly returned to the street.

When approaching Mason & Duff's office a short time before, Nick had casually observed a truckman backing up a dray laden with hogsheads of molasses, at the receiving door of a wholesale grocery house two blocks away.

Hastening thither, Nick found the truckman just drawing his team away from the elevator door, having disposed of his load.

Leading the man aside, Nick asked quietly:

"Are you Mr. Hogan, whose name is on the dray you have here?"

"I am, mister," said Hogan curiously.

"Do you want to earn a twenty-dollar note?"

"Do I look as if I did?" grinned Hogan. "Does a duck want water?"

"Can you keep a secret, and mind your own business?"

"Sure, sir, for a twenty I can do both."

"Well, there's the twenty," smiled Nick, displaying a crisp bill.

"Bedad, I see it plainly, sir, and it looks all right," said Hogan. "I wouldn't mind feeling it, too, but where do you fit in?"

"I want your dray for a few hours, also your blouse, hat, and overalls," said Nick quietly. "You can hang about here until I return with them."

"How the divil do I know you'll return?" laughed Hogan.

Nick displayed his badge, and said quietly:

"I am a detective, Mr. Hogan. My name is Nick Carter."

Hogan's eyes dilated with astonishment.

"Bedad, is that so, sur?" he said. "Sure, then, you can have the things for the asking."

"Good for you, Hogan," said Nick, with a friendliness that tickled Hogan hugely. "But they are worth what I offer, so shove the twenty into your kit. Now, mind, you're not to follow nor watch me. I am on a delicate case."

"Sure, don't you fear about me. I'll be like a post on a corner."

"I'll remember it, Hogan. Now, step into this elevator door, and let me get into your duds."

The change was quickly made, Nick also effecting a facial disguise that nearly convulsed Hogan with delight, it so resembled his own sandy-whiskered face.

Nick then scribbled a few instructions to Chick, on a leaf torn from his notebook, and dispatched Hogan to the hotel with the message.

"And now, Messrs. Mason & Duff," said Nick to himself; "I'll proceed to put myself in your way."

Mounting the dray, and with Hogan's short clay pipe between his teeth, Nick drove the team around the block, and presently hauled up at a saloon nearly opposite Mason & Duff's office.

Springing down from his lofty seat, he went into the saloon for a drink.

Before Nick had been two minutes in the place, his dray was observed by Duff from his office window.

"Hello, there's a dray yonder," he said to Mason. "The very thing, if we can get it."

"Try it."

Taking his hat, Duff stepped across the street, and encountered Nick just as he emerged from the saloon.

Nick would not have emerged just then, had he not seen him coming.

"Are you Mr. Hogan?" Duff demanded.

"No, sur," said Nick. "I'm his twin brudder, an' I worruk fur Hogan."

"Can you do a job for me?"

"Phat's it loike, sur?"

"I want about twenty empty casks moved from my cellar across the way, and taken down to my storehouse."

"Phat do I git fur it?"

"Twenty cents a cask."

"I'll do the job, sur."

"Where are your helpers?"

"After stowin' a bit o' truck I left below here, sur. Sure they'll soon be here."

"Very good. Drive round back to my elevator, and a clerk will there show you the casks and give you the directions. I'll be at the storehouse with the keys by the time you get there."

"All right, sur. I'll only wait here till me two min show up."

Duff nodded, then returned to his office.

Nick lit his pipe, sat down on the long dray, and went to smoking.

Ten minutes later two men, clad after his own fashion, put in an appearance.

They were Chick and Patsy, in response to Nick's message.

"Tumble aboard, lads," growled Nick, with a swagger for Duff's benefit in case he was looking. "We've a load of casks to move from the block forninst."

"Bedad, is that so, sur?" grinned Patsy. "Is there anything in thim?"

"No, but there's a devil of a lot in the job," said Nick pointedly.

Then he gathered up the leather ribbons over the sturdy horses, and drove round to Mason & Duff's rear door.

A clerk was waiting there, as stated, and the three detectives tackled the job like genuine old hands.

In half an hour they had the dray laden with empty casks, then they started for the storehouse, all three perched on the lofty seat.

"What's the game, Nick?" inquired Chick, when they were well away and could safely discuss the situation.

Nick quietly imparted all that had occurred.

"I don't just know what Duff is up to," he added; "but I propose to find out."

"At the storehouse?"

"Precisely."

"He will be there?"

"He said he would, and I have no doubt of it."

"And your game?"

"Will depend upon circumstances. Take your cues from me, both of you. You'll understand."

"You bet!" murmured Patsy.

Just before noon they arrived at the broad double door of the huge stone storehouse, and found it locked.

In a little entry or office adjoining, however, a man sat smoking.

"Hist!" murmured Nick, to his companions.

"That's Fagan, one of the crowd I encountered last night."

While thus speaking, Nick sprang down from the dray.

Fagan already was approaching to accost him.

"What you got there?" he demanded suspiciously.

"Sure, sur, a load of casks I was told to bring down here," replied Nick. "Be you the boss here?"

"No, I'm not the boss, but——"

"Phat the divil do you care, thin, phat I've got?"

"Who told you to bring them?" snarled Fagan, scowling.

"I did, my man," said a voice behind them.

Both turned sharp about, and beheld Mr. Wilkins Duff.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECRET PASSAGE.

"The drayman is right, Fagan," said Duff, with a quick glance. "The casks are coming here."

"All right, since you say so, Mr. Duff," returned Fagan, touching his hat.

"Take my keys and open the doors. And you, drayman, cast the lines from your load. You may roll the casks in, and I'll show you where to put them."

"Right, sur," cried Nick. "Come down from there, me buckos, and take off thim ropes. I'm late fur me dinner, so I am."

Down came Chick and Patsy, and fell to casting off the lines steadying the load.

Nick ran round the dray, as if to lend Chick a hand, and, while helping him loose a knot, he hurriedly whispered to his assistant:

"Duff is here to meet French Joe, and I must overhear. If I suddenly am missing, explain it by saying I've gone to dinner. Take the dray back to Hogan, at the corner grocery, two blocks above Duff's office. Then await me at the hotel."

"I'm on, old man," murmured Chick softly.

"Aizy, there!" yelled Nick to Patsy, as he dodged quickly back around the dray. "You'll be after spilling the whole load to onct."

"Sure I'll not, sor," cried Patsy, knowing all this was for Duff's benefit.

Then Nick started after Duff, who had entered the dim and damp storehouse, which already contained hundreds of casks and cases stowed away on the first floor.

Fagan had disappeared, and Nick rightly guessed that he had been sent after French Joe.

Yet Nick knew he had not gone by the way of the street.

"Have the casks rolled into that corner," said Duff curtly. "You needn't pile them. My men will do that."

"Right, sur."

"What do I owe you?"

"Four dollars, sur.

"Here's your money. Get them in and out yonder."

"That I will sur, fur me in'ards is gone fur want o' me dinner."

Duff heard the reply while walking toward a pile of cases near the wall toward French Joe's dive.

Then Nick turned to and helped roll in the casks.

Suddenly, with a swift glance at Duff, Nick gave Chick a sign.

Then he ducked next to one of the empty casks, and Chick turned it squarely over him, so placing it that Nick could watch Duff through the open bunghole.

Duff's attention evidently was upon something back of the pile of cases.

Presently he turned and walked toward the casks.

Patsy and Chick had them nearly all inside.

"Where's your boss?" asked Duff carelessly.

"Gone fur his grub, sor," said Chick. "Just wint."

"Grub, eh?" smiled Duff, with no suspicion of the clever trick played upon him.

"Aye, sor."

"Is that the last of them?'

"It is, sor. Will I be after closing the doors whin we go out?"

"Yes, you may as well."

Chick touched his hat, then hastened out to the street with Patsy, and presently drove away on the empty dray.

They had been very careful to place no casks in front of the one Nick was under.

Left alone, or so believing, Duff glanced at the doors Chick had closed.

"That's all right," he muttered. "Now for a word with Joe."

Peering through the bunghole, Nick saw him again approach the pile of casks. As he drew near them, Fagan emerged from behind them, closely followed by the burly French Canadian.

"Just as I suspected," thought Nick. "A secret passage."

Rather to his disappointment, however, for he wanted to hear all that was said, the three men stopped beside the casks and for ten minutes talked in tones so low Nick could not distinguish enough of their conversation to learn what they were talking about.

Nor could he see their faces well enough to read them.

Duff was telling the two men about his suspicions, and describing his plan by which to corner the three detectives.

To Nick's satisfaction, however, they presently moved nearer, and he caught just enough of their talk to serve his purpose.

"It's a good thing you came down," said French Joe, as they approached. "You can see we're running low on Reindeer Rye. Orders will have to wait, unless we can draw some more of the stuff."

Duff glanced at a stock of goods near by.

"Is that all we have here in casks?"

"Sure it is."

"The orders must wait, then," growled Duff bluntly. "It won't do to work the pipes while these Carters are pressing us so hard. There's no knowing in what quarter they may be spying, and if they get in here they might detect the sound of the flow."

"Oh, ho, a pipe line!" said Nick to himself. "Pipes running to some distant still."

"Couldn't we chance it by night?"

"Neither night nor day," said Duff decidedly. "Not a move shall be made until after the Carters are turned down, and down to stay."

"Mebbe you're right."

"I know I'm right," declared Duff. "And if our plan works, we ought to land them this very night."

"Yes, you will!" thought Nick derisively.

"Understand it, now," Duff forcibly continued. "It's odds that Mason and I are being constantly shadowed. There are three of this Carter gang on the case, and I know a bit about their methods. They pick their man, and then hound him till they run him down."

"Do you know which of them is piping off you and Mason?"

"It doesn't matter which," growled Duff. "We want all of them under our heel."

"Sure!"

"They are so sure of our guilt that two are probably shadowing Mason and myself. It's odds, Joe, that you are being watched by the third."

"I haven't twigged him yet."

"Nor will you," returned Duff bluntly. "They have a way of keeping out of sight, even when close at your heels."

"Aye, that's right."

"Make no mistake, now," added Duff forcibly. "I shall start for our place across the river at eight to-night. Mason will follow half an hour later. We have four men at the still, and I have posted them about this job. If we are separately shadowed by the Carters, the gang will be ready to take them in one by one. I think one will follow me, and one shadow Mason."

"I see," nodded Joe.

"You, Joe, must leave at nine o'clock, and come by the ferry. In case you are being shadowed by Carter, we'll be ready for him. If lucky, we should get all three of them this very night. Don't give any sign that you think you are shadowed, for I want these Carters to track us plumb into our joint."

"We'll do it, never fear!" thought Nick.

"I'll do my part, all right," said the Canadian grimly.

"And you, Fagan," added Duff; "must slip across the river with our skiff, and enter our place by the subway. Then, in case we have got the worst of it in any way, you'll be in a position to help us out. Do you see?"

"Sure I do," said Fagan, promptly. "You may count on me for sure."

"Where is the skiff now?"

"Down at Kelly's float. I'll take it from there to-night."

"Very good. Be sure to enter by the subway."

"Never fear, sir."

"That's in case these infernal Carters outwit us in any way, and are on watch at the doors."

"I'm dead on to it, sir."

"And so am I, Duff, old boy!" thought Nick. "And I'll outwit you, all right. I'll follow Fagan instead of French Joe, and enter by the subway myself, whatever that may be."

"That's all, then," said Duff. "Be prompt, and play your parts to the top limit."

"You can gamble we'll do that, sir."

"If you do, I'll wager we land all three of them. Now, Joe, get back to your crib. It's safe that none of the Carters have witnessed this meeting."

"Sure it is."

"You, Fagan, come out with me and secure the doors. God willing, we'll have the Reindeer Rye running through our pipe again by to-morrow."

Nick heard no more from them, for Duff and Fagan hastened away, and presently the heavy doors closed with a bang, and were locked behind them.

Through the bunghole of the inverted cask, Nick saw French Joe disappear back of the pile of cases, and the detective knew he was alone in the dim and silent storehouse.

Then Nick slipped out from under the cask.

"Doors locked, eh?" he said to himself. "Well, Duff, you needn't unlock them for me. I will try the Cana-

dian route, and to-night will tackle the subway along with Fagan.

"Now to investigate this secret passage."

Moving quickly, yet quietly, Nick proceeded to follow French Joe.

Back of the pile of cases he found a broad trap-door, which he raised, revealing a stairway to a dark cellar.

Lighting his pocket lamp, Nick went down, closing the trap after him.

He came to an earth floor, and what appeared to be a solid wall of masonry. Tracks on the floor, however, quickly showed Nick where an opening should be found.

At first he could not discover it. Then he saw a post near the wall and back of the stairs. Hand marks on it indicated that it might be a lever, and such it was. By forcing it to one side, Nick threw a door in the wall, so finely constructed that, when closed, it could not be seen.

Then a stone tunnel, six feet wide, and as many high, was disclosed, leading toward French Joe's cellar.

Nick entered, closed the door, and started to make a careful examination.

He found an earth floor, walls of stone, and thirty feet of tunnel ending at a door like the one just closed.

"The door of Joe's place," decided Nick.

Midway in the nearer wall to the river, and four feet above the floor, one yard of three-inch hose protruded, coupled to an iron pipe having a shut-off. The pipe ran through the wall, and straight toward the river.

Nick raised the end of the flexible hose and smelled of it.

"Whisky!" he said to himself.

"It's plain enough, now. The underground pipe runs to some secret still, probably located across the river, over in Canada.

"The liquor is driven here by means of a force pump.

"These scoundrels fill the casks here in the tunnel, then roll them into the storehouse, to be kept until sold.

"Very clever! Decidedly clever!

"But I have at least run down the Reindeer Rye. Now to run down the still, and capture every man of the gang who is in the infamous enterprise."

Already familiar with the way, Nick decided to depart by French Joe's place.

After listening for several moments at the stone door, he found that he could easily open it from the tunnel.

Then he entered the trap cellar and closed the door after him.

He was in the cellar in which he had had the conflict the previous night.

Putting out the lamp, Nick softly climbed the stairs till he could grasp the lever throwing the trap.

Then he listened intently, but not a sound came from above.

Then Nick tapped lightly on the floor in a way that could easily have been heard in the room above, yet it brought no sound in response.

"The back room is vacant, all right," he said to himself.

Then he pressed the lever, sprung the trap, and cautiously raising the latter, he looked into the room.

The door leading to the barroom was closed.

Stepping up into the room, Nick softly closed the trap, then slipped quietly out into the alley and gained the street unobserved.

"A good morning's work!" he said to himself, as he hastened away to his hotel.

"And that of to-night shall be even better. I will promise myself that much."

CHAPTER VII.

TRACKING FAGAN.

"What if they attempt to cut our throats, sir, before you show up?" asked Patsy, with a wink.

The three detectives were seated at lunch in their private dining room, about an hour after Nick's return.

He had told them all he had heard and discovered, and had disclosed his plans for the work of that night.

"They will not do that, Patsy," replied Nick. "They will not imperil their precious necks by committing murder before they have all three of us in their clutches."

"Not likely," observed Chick.

"I want them to get hands on you two," said Nick; "for that will so elate them that they'll become careless, and feel certain of nailing me, also. In this way I can more easily steal a march on them, and get safely into their crib."

"Then, sir, all three of us will be in there," cried Patsy.

"That is precisely what I want," said Nick. "If you two are confined or tied up, I will find a way by which to liberate you. Then the three of us can corral the whole gang."

"Well, rather!"

"This plan will serve us best, since we must approach the place separately in order to fall in with Duff's scheme, and so throw them off their guard. It will be better than trying to force things by a raid, in which some of them might possibly escape. Having got you two, they'll feel dead sure of me, also. But I'll fool them, and will wager we land them all."

"The plan is a good one, Nick," nodded Chick approvingly.

"And we will adopt it," concluded Nick. "Patsy may shadow Duff, and get himself cornered first. Next, Chick, you will show up at Mason's heels, and be taken into camp."

"And you, Nick?"

Nick laughed dryly.

"I shall make the Canadian think I am after him," said he; "and their whole gang will be on the watch for me from the moment he arrives at their place to-night. I will fool them, however, by following Fagan. To what he will lead me remains to be seen. Now, let's get ready for the work."

An hour later Chick and Patsy had departed to shadow Mason and Duff.

Disguised as a river boatman, Nick left the hotel at five o'clock and went to find Kelly's landing, from which Fagan had said he would cross the river in his skiff. Nick knew he would not start before dark.

The detective easily located the landing, and at a boat-house a short distance away he obtained a light row-boat, which he concealed under a wharf just above Kelly's landing.

Then Nick showed himself opposite French Joe's dive several times, until the Canadian caught sight of him.

The latter's face quickly showed that he thought he was

being shadowed, also that he was hugely tickled by the fact, and by the prospect of getting even with the detective.

Then Nick vanished from that locality, but when darkness came, he stole down to the wharf and boarded his rowboat.

With some strips of cloth he muffled the oars and rowlocks, enabling him to propel the light craft without the slightest sound.

Then he waited for Fagan, not expecting him much before nine o'clock, since the latter was to help the gang out in event of a miscarriage of their plans against the three detectives.

The detective was taking no chance, however, that the scamp would start earlier.

Nearly two hours passed, and the city clocks struck nine, yet Nick's patience was tireless.

Half an hour later heavy footsteps sounded on the hollow boarding of the float at Kelly's landing.

Thick clouds hung low in the heavens, and not a solitary star was visible.

It was so dark along the river front, and out across the smooth surface of the black river, that an object ten feet distant could not have been seen.

Yet Nick felt sure that the footsteps on the landing were being made by Fagan, and he presently had ample evidence.

Before putting off in the skiff, the man filled and lit his pipe, and the flame of the match plainly illumined his evil countenance.

It was the face of Mr. Fagan.

Nick heard him board the boat and put off.

Then the sound of the oars, as Fagan pulled leisurely away, came to Nick's ears.

"The darkness serves me well," Nick said to himself. "I can track him by the sound, yet he neither can see nor hear me."

Getting out his oars, Nick quickly began the silent pursuit.

Fagan bore straight across the river, and the detective ran astern and below him.

The trip was quickly made.

Presently scattered lights on the Canadian side could be seen, and Nick shot his rowboat swiftly ahead, it becoming plain where Fagan was about to land.

Soon Nick reached a stone wall, to which he silently clambered, then shoved his rowboat off and let her drift away.

Then he dropped flat upon the wall, and waited.

A few minutes later Fagan landed about a rod away, and made his skiff fast to a ring in the wall.

Nick had sized up the place as well as the darkness permitted.

The landing was at the end of a deep yard, with a high board fence on each side, and a two-story wooden building some forty feet from the landing. In the yard was a shed, with several wagons under it, and the building faced on a dark and narrow street.

"Some bluff business here," thought Nick. "There's a secret still somewhere in that building, I'll wager."

Yet the building appeared to be in absolute darkness, with the yard deserted, and not a sound audible from any quarter.

Having secured his boat, Fagan rose and started across the yard, pausing at times to listen.

Nick followed with the stealth of a cat. The gloom was in his favor, yet he scarce could see Fagan's moving figure.

Suddenly the latter approached a square wooden structure about three feet high, built close against the board fence, and disappeared.

Nick quickly stole nearer, and instantly discovered the truth.

The square structure was the curb of a deep well, with a stout windlass. The rope hung straight down the well, and Fagan was descending it.

"The subway!" said Nick to himself. "There's a tunnel here leading under the building. A secret way of escape in case of a raid, by which to reach the river. I'll follow you, my man."

Nick listened till no sound came up from below, then he quietly got over the curb and prepared to descend.

Firmly gripping the rope, he let himself down by slow degrees.

It was damp and cold, and the sensation was not agreeable, yet he knew he could stand anything that Fagan had stood.

Twenty feet from the top Nick detected a gleam of light, and presently discovered about what he had expected.

The light came from a bull's-eye lantern, which shed its rays through a long tunnel, the entrance of which was in the side of the well, and cleverly hidden from above by protruding stones. Along the floor of the tunnel ran an iron pipe, which disappeared into the earth just inside the stonework.

Crouching in the glow of the lantern, and at a closed door at the tunnel's end, was the figure of Fagan.

"The Canadian end of this pipe line," thought Nick, still hanging by the rope. "And Fagan yonder, eh? That door must lead into the secret joint. He's listening to learn what has happened. I must nail him before he can open that door or give an alarm."

It was a delicate bit of work, yet the soft earth of the tunnel was in Nick's favor.

Softly fixing his feet on the stonework, he drew himself into the aperture.

Then he began the stealthy approach.

Fagan, crouched to one knee, had not stirred.

Step by step, foot by foot, inch by inch, the detective crept nearer.

Five, ten, twenty feet were covered; and then less than ten divided the two men.

Nick drew his revolver, and took another step.

Then Fagan heard him.

He started, glanced quickly about, and at first took Nick for one of the gang. He had not dreamed that he was being shadowed.

Nick gave him no chance to speak. He reached him with one bound, and clapped the cold muzzle of his revolver to the startled fellow's head.

"Utter one sound and I'll fire!" hissed Nick.

Fagan made no attempt to make an outcry. There was in Nick's flaming eyes a look which threatened death more eloquently even than his fiercely whispered words.

Fagan wilted under it, and dared not ignore the stern commands that followed. The price would certainly have been his life, and he knew it.

In five minutes Nick had the miscreant secured hand and foot, with a gag tied fast in his mouth.

While thus engaged the detective caught him dropping a key to the floor, and attempting to hide it in the soft earth.

Nick knew at once it was the key to the tunnel door.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNDERGROUND STILL.

With Fagan down and out, so that he could not possibly give an alarm, Nick felt easier. He did not trouble himself to question the miscreant, for he would have had no faith in his answers.

For several minutes he listened intently at the closed door, but could hear no sound from beyond it.

Then with the utmost caution he inserted Fagan's key into the lock.

Next he closed the lantern, leaving the tunnel as dark as the darkest tomb.

"I'll see, before I'm seen, in case anybody is out there," he said to himself.

Carefully turning the key, he shot the bolt, then swung the door a few inches and peered out.

A room, dimly lighted with an oil lamp on the wall, met his gaze.

A wooden chair stood near an opposite door.

In the middle of the room was a powerful horizontal engine, with a force-pump attachment, and a dynamo for making electricity.

"An underground engine room," said Nick to himself, quickly taking in the various features.

"A dynamo for electrical heating.

"A pump for forcing Reindeer Rye through their pipe line, from here to the storehouse secret passage.

"The pipe runs underground, and is submerged in the river. An expensive and gigantic fraud, indeed. Yet there ill-gotten profits must have been enormous.

"The way appears clear. I'll go a step farther."

Quietly entering the room, he closed the tunnel door, then continued his cautious investigations.

An adjoining room was in darkness, and he resorted to his lantern.

In this room were four huge copper tanks, each capable of holding about two hundred gallons. Three of them were full of recently distilled liquor.

"The pumping is done from these, evidently," thought Nick. "Yet the work here is now shut down. They're taking no chances, eh? Well, I'll see that it stays shut down!"

Beyond the tanks, Nick discovered what he was seeking, the still itself, heated from the dynamo mentioned, and having a daily capacity of hundreds of gallons.

Ranged next to the wall were about twenty barrels of rye mash, in various stages of fermentation.

The huge still and condenser, the machinery and piping, all were of first-class construction; and more conclusive evidence of the great fraud could not have been desired.

All was underground, moreover, evidently in a carefully constructed excavation below the cellar of the building mentioned.

Nick wanted no more—except every man of this gang of moonshiners.

And he now set about getting them.

A brief search revealed a stone stairway leading up to a trapdoor.

Carefully raising the door, he entered a dark cellar under the building, and a flash of the lantern revealed a pile of loose earth near by, with which the trap could, if necessary, be quickly covered and concealed, thus hiding all evidence of the subterranean enterprise beneath.

"A masterly piece of work!" grimly muttered the detective.

"I'll give Mason and Duff credit for more than ordinary cleverness.

"But that's not all I'll give them.

"Hello, that's Duff's voice!"

The sound came from above, and toward one side of the building.

Nick flashed the beam of the lantern this way and that, and presently discovered in a rear corner of the cellar a flight of wooden steps.

Mounting these, he reached a closed door.

"No light next to the threshold. Locked, and the key removed. This is easy."

With a picklock he shot the bolt, and softly opened the door.

It gave him admission to a small office, with a single desk and chair.

"The bluff business! Evidently it consists of hay and grain, by the smell."

He was right.

Handling hay and grain on the square, had made it easy to procure, unsuspected, an abundance of rye for crooked work.

By rapid degrees now Nick was getting every particular of the gigantic fraud.

Through the office door, which was open, he detected a faint glow of light.

Closing the slide of his lantern, he stole into an adjoining storeroom of large size.

At the same moment, one quick rap sounded on the front door of the building, and Nick drew back to the office.

Then Duff, with a lantern in his hand, strode out of a room near the front door, and quickly approached the latter.

"Who's there?" he softly demanded.

A subdued voice answered from outside.

"It's Joe!" cried Duff quickly. "Take the lantern, one of you. Light must not be seen from outside. Into the room with it. Now, Joe, come in."

The Canadian quickly entered, and Duff closed the door.

"You're late, Joe," he growled harshly.

"Can't help it," retorted French Joe. "I started on time. Was delayed at the ferry."

"Have you seen anything?"

"Of Carter?"

"Yes, of course."

"I saw a bloke I took for him outside of my saloon just before dark."

"Good!"

"I've not seen him since."

"You'd not have been likely to. That's not like him. But our game is working well."

"What of the other two?"

"I've got them," answered Duff exultantly.

"No! On the level?"

"On the dead level, Joe."

"Where are they?"

"They lie bound hand and foot in the grain room. It's

just as I suspected. Nick Carter himself is the one after you."

"You bet I am," thought Nick. "I'm after the whole bunch of you."

"Who is outside?" demanded the Canadian.

"Five of the gang, including Haley, Gill, and Royce, with two of the men from here. Mason and the other two are in the room yonder. We have the shutters up, and no light can be seen from the outside."

"So I noticed. How did you get the two detectives?"

"Precisely as I planned. One shadowed me, and the other came after Mason. We arrived separately. They both tracked us into the yards, and our boys nabbed them."

"Didn't they put up a fight?"

"They were given no chance to fight, you can bet on that."

"In the grain room, d'ye say?"

"Yes."

"I'm cursed if I don't have a look at them!" growled the Canadian.

"There's a lantern there," said Duff, briefly detaining him. "It's an inside room, you know, with no windows. I'm going to slip Norton out the side door to investigate. Carter himself ought to be nosing around here by this time."

"So I am," muttered Nick. "And you'll presently discover it."

While Duff disappeared into the room from which he had emerged, French Joe strode toward the rear of the building, and passed back of a lot of baled hay.

As silently as a cat, Nick darted swiftly after him, for he now knew that part of the gang were outside watching for him, and that his presence in the building was not so much as dreamed of.

The Canadian entered an inner room, in which grain was stored for dry keeping, leaving the door ajar after him.

A lighted lantern stood on the floor in one corner.

On a heap of empty bags opposite were stretched Chick and Patsy, bound hand and foot with stout ropes.

French Joe's hard features relaxed with a grim smile of exultation when he saw them.

"Humph!" he grunted maliciously. "So we've got you two, have we?"

Chick and Patsy looked up at him, frowning darkly. The gang had seen no need of gagging them, and Chick grimly answered:

"It looks like it."

"And we'll soon have your boss, along with you," sneered the Canadian.

"Think so?"

"Aye, I do! We'll teach you to meddle with us."

"You will, eh?"

"Yes, and in a way you'll not fancy. You two coveys are as good as under the sod."

"Going to kill us in cold blood, are you?"

"Cold or hot won't matter to us," growled French Joe, with a vicious glare at them. "You came here looking for trouble, and now you've got it. Wait till we've nailed your boss. I'm just looking to get even with him for the crack he gave me last night."

"Look out that he doesn't give you another."

"Not likely."

"Is that so?"

"He'll find it is. I'll make it a point to do him with my own hand. I wish I had him here now. I'd soon show you what I'd——"

He stopped, swung sharp about, and his wish was gratified.

Nick Carter had stolen silently into the room and closed the door.

Yet the Canadian seemed suddenly to sense his presence.

For an instant he was staggered, and a cry of warning and alarm started to his lips.

That one instant proved fatal to the cry, however, and nearly fatal to the man himself.

With a single bound, Nick sprang upon him, and the detective's hand closed with a viselike grip on the Canadian's throat.

Knowing the desperate character of the man, and that he might try to give his confederates warning even under the muzzle of a revolver, Nick had decided to rely entirely upon his physical strength to overcome the man before he could give an alarm.

A terrific struggle ensued, for the Canadian was a burly fellow, and desperation gave him double his ordinary strength.

With the guttural snarl of a throttled grizzly, he seized Nick around the body and attempted to throw him.

The detective saw the design, and knew that the noise of a fall would reach the ears of the gang.

A few feet away were about twenty bags of grain, making a pile about three feet above the floor, so with a sudden twist and turn, yet without once relaxing his grip on the ruffian's throat, Nick raised him bodily and forced him to his back on the pile of grain.

From that moment there was no sound louder than the choked breathing of the struggling Canadian, who fought like a demon against the fate that threatened him.

Nick wasted no breath upon words or threats, and, forcing French Joe flat upon his back, the detective's hand closed still harder around the man's throat.

Suddenly a whispered cry from Chick reached his ears.

"Look out for him, Nick! He's reaching for his knife!"

Nick already had felt Joe's arm glide from around him, and at once suspected his design.

He no longer withheld the blow he had refrained from giving.

Twice his free hand rose and fell with crushing force on the Canadian's head, sending him into dreamland, with every muscle relaxed, and with his burly figure quivering like that of an ox struck down in the shambles.

"Good work, sir!" cried Patsy dryly. "It serves the duffer right."

Nick quickly rose and released both of his assistants, and with the same ropes bound French Joe hand and foot.

"Watch him, Patsy," said Nick hurriedly. "We have no time to waste. If he shows signs of coming round, slip a gag into his mouth and make it fast."

"With pleasure!" said Patsy grimly.

"Got your guns, Chick?"

"No, Duff has them," replied Chick. "Both mine and Patsy's."

"We must get them," said Nick quickly. "I'll have Duff in here. Stand back of the door, and close it the instant he enters."

Leaving the door of the grain room only partly open, Nick stole out by the way he had entered, until he reached the last of the bales of hay, by which the room was concealed from the front of the long building.

There he paused to listen, and voices raised in animated discussion fell on his ears.

CHAPTER IX.

TAKEN IN.

The five men who had been watching outside for Nick now had entered the building.

They were trying to convince Duff that French Joe had not been shadowed, because of the fact that no sign of the detective had been discovered.

"I can't help that," Duff angrily was protesting. "French Joe must have been followed."

"Why so?"

"Because it's not like Nick Carter to have left this work entirely to his assistants. The very fact that we have cornered them, shows that he is on this job with them."

"That's right," snarled Mason nervously.

"He is somewhere about here, and either has seen you fellows and laid low, or in some way accidentally given you the slip."

"He couldn't have seen us," growled Haley.

"You don't know him," sneered Duff. "He has the eyes of a lynx."

"That may be, but I know we were well under cover," retorted Haley. "He didn't shadow Joe Dupree down the road, for I was watching, and must have seen him."

"Humph!"

"And he hasn't showed up at either fence, nor in the yard, since Joe came in here ten minutes ago. That's dead certain."

"Possibly——" began Mason, with a whine.

"Dry up, Mason!" Duff sharply interrupted. "I'm running this funeral. These fellows ought to have waited longer outside. This particular Carter is a weasel not easily caught."

"But Joe wasn't dead sure that he saw Carter at all," cried Haley half angrily. "All he knew——"

"Sing out for Joe," Duff again interrupted. "We'll find out what he knows and doesn't know. Sing out for him, I say. He's in the grain room."

Then Nick took a hand.

The situation, while he felt that he could successfully handle it, was not precisely to his fancy.

He knew there were seven men, including Duff, in the front room, all ready to put up a most desperate fight to prevent exposure and arrest, and all armed to the teeth.

On the other hand, Chick and Patsy had been deprived of their revolvers, and Nick had only his own.

Against ordinary knaves, he would not have hesitated to attempt keeping them all covered, until each could be secured by his assistants; but he was convinced that both Duff and Mason would take any chance of life, rather than thus submit.

The hazard of such a pistol fight as inevitably would follow seemed too great to take, except as a last resort, and so Nick fell back upon a ruse by which to recover the lost weapons.

Before Duff had fairly ceased speaking of French Joe, the detective cleverly imitated the Canadian's heavy voice, and carelessly called out, through the semidarkness in which the main room was shrouded:

"I say, Duff, look out here for a minute. I've got an idea about that."

"That's Joe!" cried Haley quickly.

"I've got ears!" snarled Duff, in the worst of vicious temper. "I'll go see what he wants."

His ugliness kept the others from following him, and he came striding alone toward the grain room, asking curtly:

"What do you say you've got, Joe? An idea about Carter?"

Nick had retreated, to draw him on, and already had disappeared into the room.

"Yes, Duff," he cried, still imitating the Canadian's voice. "Look in here for a second."

And Mr. Wilkins Duff, without the slightest suspicion of anything wrong in his plans, strode pompously into the room.

"What's your idea?" he demanded, as he entered. "What's your——"

"Silence!"

"Good God!"

"Another sound, and I'll fire! The door, Chick!"

"Right!"

"My idea is that your game is up, Mr. Duff. If you utter a sound above a whisper, I'll blow the top of your villainous head off!"

Duff stood like a man suddenly turned to stone. Amazement and dismay paralyzed his tongue for a moment, and, besides, he found himself looking straight into the muzzle of Nick Carter's revolver, scarce two inches from his horrified eyes.

Then he heard the door behind him softly closed, and beheld Chick and Patsy on either side of him, then saw the bound figure of the senseless Canadian prostrate on the grain bags.

Grown ghastly pale, with a white froth suddenly visible on his twitching lips, he involuntarily gasped:

"Who are you?"

"Mark me!" said Nick, with terrible sternness. "If you give one sound of alarm, I'll kill you as I would a dog. When you last saw me, Wilkins Duff, my name was Hogan, and I was trucking casks."

"Hogan! Casks!"

"Lively, Chick! The guns!"

"I've got them, Nick."

"Devil! You shadowed Fagan!" gasped Duff.

The whole truth, how skillfully he had been duped, suddenly had dawned upon Duff.

He seemed hardly conscious of what Chick was doing, or that Patsy stood ready to down him if he spoke a loud word.

"Fagan," replied Nick, with motionless revolver, "lies bound hand and foot in your subway."

"Oh, my heavens, I'm done for!"

"That's what you are, Duff, and you'd best take it quietly, or you'll not realize it at all," said Nick, with unmistakable significance. "The bracelets, Chick, in my left pocket."

"Right!"

"Not a sound, Duff! Your life will be the price."

The scoundrel knew it.

With his six confederates at his back, he would have taken a desperate chance of life, and have put up a fight.

Alone with the three detectives, however, and Nick's revolver under his very nose, the miscreant wilted like a coward.

In half a minute, Chick had his hands in bracelets behind him, and his feet secured with a strip of line, while Patsy deftly passed a folded handkerchief over his mouth and knotted it fast behind.

In Duff's pockets were found both Chick's and Patsy's revolvers, as well as his own, and the detectives took the whole lot.

"This feels more natural," whispered Patsy. "It's like getting back an old friend."

He was helping Nick place Duff on the grain bags, from which the helpless knave presently glared up at them with impotent bitterness and hatred.

The entire episode had not taken more than two minutes.

"Now," said Nick, "to corral those fellows in the front room, and prevent any escape."

"We might call a couple more of them here, and repeat this job," suggested Chick.

"No need of it," said Nick. "The odds are but six to three, and we are good for two each without sweating a hair."

"Rather!" drawled Patsy dryly.

"Have your guns ready, that's all," whispered Nick. "Let no man get out of that room."

"If one tries it, he'll end in being carried out," grinned Patsy, with a gun in each hand.

"Come on!"

Then Nick quietly opened the door, and the three detectives stole silently from the room.

The gang still was waiting Duff's return, and though his absence had been brief, they were becoming impatient.

"What the devil's keeping him?" Mason was asking, with an ugly scowl. "I don't like this. I don't feel right."

Nick heard him, and led his companions forward more quickly.

He knew that in a moment more some of the gang would start for the grain room to investigate.

"Shall I go see?" demanded Haley.

"Yes—no!" whined Mason irritably. "I'll go myself."

"Leave him to me," whispered Nick, closely followed by Chick and Patsy.

They were within twenty feet of the front-room door.

At that moment, Mason hurriedly emerged, and his startled eyes fell upon the three figures quickly approaching in the dim light.

Instantly a yell broke from him.

"Look out! We're cornered!"

Then he tried to dart away to one side, but Nick reached him in a bound, and with one well-directed blow sent him senseless to the floor.

"At them, boys!" he thundered, turning like a flash. "I'm with you!"

Chick already was at the open door.

Haley and Royce also had reached the threshold from within.

With a couple of crashing blows, Chick sent them backward, headlong into the arms of the ruffians behind them.

Then the three detectives rushed into the room, barring the way to the door.

"Throw up your hands, you fellows!" Nick coolly roared. "I'll shoot the first man who reaches for his gun."

The five men in the room had recoiled to the farther wall.

Lined up opposite stood the three detectives, each with a brace of revolvers, with which every man of the moonshiners was effectually covered.

"Not a move!" commanded Nick. "It wil cost a life. We have you dead to rights, every man of you. Up with your hands."

His word was not required to convince them, for the situation spoke for itself.

They caved to a man, and, grim and scowling, silently obeyed his stern command.

"Secure Mason first, Patsy," said Nick. "Then tie them all up in pairs. Chick and I will keep them covered."

From that time the work was easy.

In ten minutes the detectives had the entire gang in irons or ropes, and beyond the possibility of escape.

Then Nick made a careful survey of the whole place, and assured himself that the job was completely done.

Nick did not wait for extradition papers.

Finding a telephone connection with Detroit, he called up the main office of police, and at midnight had the entire gang across the river and behind prison bars.

The exposure and trial that followed later gave the whole country a startling surprise, and to the Carters an augmented reputation.

Though the facts that the underground still was located in Canada, and the notorious Reindeer Rye was handled in the States, occasioned some legal delays in the prosecution, the entire gang finally got all that was due them.

And Nick Carter's pipe-line case went down into history as one of the most extraordinary of its kind on record.

THE END.

"Nick Carter and the Gold Thieves; or, The Grubstake Mill Conspiracy," is the title of the story that will appear in the next issue of this weekly. Have you ever pictured in your mind the utter horror of being buried alive? Nick Carter goes through just such an experience in this story. But this is only one of the many exciting adventures that befell the great detective in his chase of a daring band of mine robbers. The issue is No. 17, and it will be out January 4th.

BROWN'S AUNT.

By MAX ADELER.

Scene in the court of common pleas, in the case of Duffer against Brown.

Attorney for the prosecution (to Mr. Smith, the witness on the stand): "Now go on with your testimony, Mr. Smith. You say that the defendant was living with his mother at the time?"

Smith: "Yes, sir, with his mother; and his aunt——"

Attorney: "With his mother and his aunt?"

"No, with his mother."

"But you said he was living with his mother and his aunt."

"What I meant was he was living with his mother, and his aunt——"

"There you go again. You say he was living only with

his mother. What do you mean then by referring to his aunt?"

"Why, I meant that his aunt——"

"That'll do," broke in the judge savagely; "never mind his aunt; his mother is enough."

"But," said Smith, "his aunt was——"

"Never mind, sir, what his aunt was," said the judge.

"I merely wanted to explain that his aunt——"

"Silence, sir! No more of this. Mr. Perry, go on with the examination."

"When you met the defendant," asked the attorney, "what occurred?"

"Why, he told me that he had no aunt——"

"That aunt again!" growled the judge.

"May it please your honor," said the lawyer, "he says now the defendant told him he had no aunt."

"Oh, no," said Smith, "you don't understand."

"Do you mean to say, sir, you did not swear that the defendant told you he had no aunt?"

"He told me he had no aunt——"

"Precisely. Told you that he had no aunt! And yet you said a moment ago that he was living with his aunt. What d'you mean, sir? What d'you mean?"

"I say that he said he had no aunt living——"

"Ah! had no aunt living; that is it, is it? His aunt was dead, then?"

"No."

"How? No trifling, sir."

"He said that he had no aunt living——"

"Just so. None living."

"None living, excepting in Maryland."

"Ah, then, he had some aunts living in Maryland, had he?"

"No, sir."

"What! are you insane, sir? Didn't you say he had some aunts living in Maryland."

"Well, you see, I wouldn't exactly say aunts."

"What would you say, then? Explain yourself. Had he one aunt in Maryland, or more?"

"He had more than one."

"How many had he? Two?"

"N-n-no! Not exactly two. You see——"

"Your honor, this man is trifling with us," said the counsel to the judge.

"See here, young man," said the judge, "this kind of thing will subject you to imprisonment for contempt of court. Answer my question. Had the defendant one aunt or two?"

"He had a little less than two, your honor."

"Then he had one, of course?"

"No; he had more than one. Let me expl——"

"I understand you, then, to say that the defendant, James Magruder Brown, had at this time, in the State of Maryland, two aunts?"

"No, sir; there were three women, but a trifle less than two aunts, because——"

"Mr. Clerk," said the judge, "fine this man one hundred dollars. Now, sir, tell me pre-cise-ly—how—many—aunts—the—defend-ant—had."

"He had precisely one and a half aunts."

"Mr. Clerk, impose another fine of the same amount upon this rascal. Now, unless you explain yourself promptly, I will double the fine again."

"Yes, sir; you see, your honor, Brown's maternal grandfather married twice."

"What has that got to do with it? We don't want the defendant's family for generations back lugged into this case."

"Brown's mother was his daughter by his first wife. By his second wife he had three other daughters, who are Brown's mother's half sisters and Brown's half aunts. Three half aunts make one aunt and a half. That's what I mean."

"Why didn't you tell us this in the first place?"

"You didn't give me a chance."

"Mr. Clerk, remove those fines. Mr. Smith, let me warn you not to bring these family conundrums into court in the future. Mr. Perry, go on with the case."

The case went on, and Brown's aunt and a half were dropped from discussion.

WHO WAS THE MODEL?

Or, Missing: A Beautiful Heiress.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Matilda Mason, a beautiful heiress, who lives with her uncle, the Reverend Doctor Lawton, in Boston, mysteriously disappears. The case is reported to Chief Inspector Watts by Doctor Lawton and Miss Mason's fiancé, Benjamin Wade. Detective Sheridan is assigned to the case, and starts to go to Doctor Lawton's house to see a picture of the missing girl.

After seeing the pictures, Detective Keene views Miss Mason's room, and notes with interest some sketches she has made. In talking with Mrs. Lawton, the detective learns that Miss Mason had been out almost every morning for some time before her disappearance, and had neglected to say how she had spent her time.

Keene then leaves the house with Wade, who shows a disposition to stick to the detective as closely as he can. Keene visits several art schools in search of a clew, but with no results. Keene, who looks with suspicion on Wade, tells the young man that he will meet him at police headquarters the next morning.

CHAPTER V.

A STUDY IN STONE.

Though his appointment with Ben Wade was not until ten o'clock, Sheridan Keene was out betimes next morning and eager to resume his visit to the studios of Boston's art votaries, in search of something that might shed light upon Tillie Mason's mysterious disappearance.

To his engagement with Wade the detective gave scarce a thought. It had been made only to avoid the persistent companionship of the young man, and Keene had no idea of going out of his own way to keep the appointment. The case was already assuming features which did not permit of conventional scruples.

The city clocks were on the stroke of eight when Detective Keene turned into Boylston Street, not far from Park Square, and approached the studio of John Hale, the eminent young sculptor. The hour was rather too early for expecting to find the sculptor at his rooms, but Keene thought he might possibly obtain admission and perhaps acquire from others the information he sought. As to the first he was not doomed to disappointment.

He climbed the stairs leading to Hale's elaborate studio and chambers, and unceremoniously tried the door. He found it unlocked, and immediately entered the studio, which served also as a reception room.

It was a large chamber in the front of the building. There were tapestries at the windows and a heavy Wilton covered the floor. Aside from the general furnishings, which indicated a man of wealth and refinement, there were features which suggested the art and culture of the occupant. In picturesque arrangement about the room there were innumerable pieces of the sculptor's handiwork, statuettes, medallions in bas-relief, casts, models, and the like, the general effect of which, in a room otherwise conventionally furnished, appealed with curious effect to an unaccustomed observer.

But that which appealed with most significance to Sheridan Keene the instant he entered and sent a thrill through his veins, was the figure which occupied alone an alcove at one side of the large chamber.

It was a life-size study in marble, occupying a low pedestal a few inches higher than the floor. It was the draped figure of a beautiful girl, presenting nude only a part of the trunk, after the Venus de Milo, and exhibiting a form of rare if not perfect symmetry and beauty. The pose was superlatively graceful, and the figure eminently striking; but the face of the subject was probably an ideal one, or at least one that served no purpose of Sheridan Keene.

Yet the detective instinctively felt that he here had run the game from cover.

The only animated occupant of the room when Keene entered was a lad of about twelve years, who was busy with a feather duster nearly as large as himself. He came forward when Keene entered, and the latter at once said in that cheerful way which invariably wins a boy's heart:

"Hello, my lad! I suppose I am a little early to hit Mr. Hale?"

"What do you want to hit him for, sir?" demanded the lad. "What's he done to you?"

Keene laughed aloud.

"Must I speak by the card, then? Dear me! how early these Boston youngsters mature," he exclaimed amusedly. "I presume I should have said, 'I am too early to find Mr. Hale in his studio'?"

"Rather, sir," nodded the lad. "Mr. Hale don't come in till about nine o'clock."

"I suppose I can wait here, my lad?"

"Yes, sir; will you take a chair?"

"I'll look over these odds and ends out here," replied Keene, carelessly throwing off his coat. "Curious lot of truck, isn't it?"

"Mr. Hale might not call it so, sir."

"Not likely, my boy, I'll admit. I shall have to ask Mr. Hale's pardon."

"There'll be no need for it, sir, for I shan't tell him."

"Good for you," laughed Keene. "You are discreet beyond your years. That's quite a figure over there in the alcove, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir; it is."

"Who was the model for that, I wonder? Most of such figures are made from models, aren't they?"

"I think so, sir."

"You don't happen to know who the model was in this case, do you?"

"If I do, I am not allowed to tell."

"That so?"

"Yes, sir."

"What's the idea in that? Anything so very private about it?"

"I can't say as to that, sir," replied the lad, shaking the duster in the statue's face with an audacity which the living subject would have instantly resented. "I only know that I have been told not to say anything about Mr. Hale's models."

"Ah, I see," nodded Keene. "Still, I suppose you know who the model was, don't you?"

"No, sir; I don't."

"How does that happen?"

"Because I have been at work here only two weeks, sir," explained the lad. "Mr. Hale had that figure done before I came here, so I never happened to see the model."

"So far as you know, I suppose you mean?"

"How, sir?"

"I mean that she might have called here since the figure was finished, and you then would have seen her."

"But I shouldn't know her in street clothes!" exclaimed the lad, with artless significance.

Keene laughed deeply.

"You would have to see her just as she stands, eh? Well, well, my lad, you are all right. By the way, who was employed here in your place before you came to work for Mr. Hale?"

"I dunno, sir. Some other boy, I suppose."

"Don't you know his name?"

"No, sir; I never heard it."

"I guess you could find out for me, couldn't you, if I were to make it an object?"

"I might, sir; for——"

"If you were to talk less you would say less, Johnny, my dear," interrupted a voice from the adjoining room—the sculptor's workroom.

The speaker emerged while giving the utterance of the words, and came upon the scene not a little to the surprise of Sheridan Keene.

She was a young woman of twenty-five or thereabouts, with luminous dark eyes and a very handsome face and figure. The color in her cheeks was rather too steadfast to be natural, the lines of her pretty mouth were firm, and her expression was that of a woman of strong will and forceful nature. She wore her street garments, held her muff in her hand, as if she recently had entered the place, and her dress and general aspect were decidedly of a type termed dashing—that of an adventuress or one of the demimonde.

The lad showed no surprise when this woman entered from the sculptor's workroom, nor did he resent her comment upon his loquacity. He looked up with a boyish laugh, and rejoined artlessly:

"Weren't tongues made to talk with, Miss Bell?"

"Yes, Johnny, and feet were made to run with," replied Miss Bell, patting the lad's head. "Therefore, take this letter and run down to State Street with it and wait for an answer. It will save my keeping Mr. Hale waiting should he presently arrive."

The lad offered no objection. In fact, he was willing to enjoy the outside air. He took the missive tendered, and snatched his cap from the head of a bust in one corner and hastened out and away.

Miss Bell looked askance at the detective; he had turned aside and was looking from the window into the street below.

The woman hesitated for a moment, then coughed slightly, and smilingly said, as the detective turned:

"Beg pardon, sir; were you waiting to see Mr. Hale?"

"Yes, Miss——"

"Bell is my name, sir."

"Yes, Miss Bell, thank you; I am waiting for Mr. Hale," bowed Keene, who was quite equal to reading a woman at her face value.

"He doesn't usually come before nine, sir. Will you take a chair?"

"Presently, thank you. I am rather interested in these various pieces of art. I presume they are Mr. Hale's work."

"Yes, sir; most of them."

"Are you also waiting for him?"

"Oh, yes," said Miss Bell, smiling oddly. "I am employed by him at times."

Keene instantly understood her to be one of the sculptor's models.

"Perhaps you have an appointment with him," he observed, thereby aiming to learn if Hale was likely to put in an appearance.

"Yes, I have one this morning," Miss Bell replied. "I am to pose for his Diana. I infer from what I overheard you say to Johnny that you were interested in the statue yonder. It is a piece of work of which Mr. Hale is very proud—and fond! You've heard of sculptors falling in love with their own creations in marble, haven't you?"

If this woman thought herself in communication with a man slow to grasp the full significance of a glance, a tone, or a gesture, she was overleaping her mount. The laugh with which she had spoken, the subtle insinuation she had made, the voice with which she had given the overt slur—all were given a far deeper significance by Sheridan Keene than the woman intended.

Yet the face of the detective did not change by so much as a shadow. He decided he would give her all the rope she wanted. He laughed lightly, meeting with a responsive glance the flash of her lustrous eyes, and said:

"Yes; I have heard it said of Phidias. But I think if sculptors fell in love with the subjects from which are modeled their creations, they would show better judgment."

Miss Bell responded with a ripple of laughter.

"So do I!" she exclaimed; then added shortly, "in most cases, at least."

"Do you know, Miss Bell, who was the model for this figure?" Keene ventured to inquire, with affected indifference.

Miss Bell shot a quick glance at him and smiled significantly.

"Don't hide your interest because you are talking to me instead of to Johnny," she rejoined pointedly. "I heard what you said to him. Why are you so anxious to discover who posed for this figure, sir?"

"Because I rather admire a beautiful woman, and would like to learn the identity of the living reality," said Keene dryly.

"Ah, indeed! Well, I will not tell you," was the curt response.

"Perhaps Mr. Hale will do so."

"Indeed, he will not."

"No?"

"He's not half so likely to as I am."

"Would you tell me if you knew there was some urgent reason for my knowing?" asked Keene, with a searching scrutiny of her dark eyes, now half frowning at him from under her brows.

"I don't know that I would," she replied, with a curl of her lips. "It is unprofessional, you know. I am a model myself, but I'd not thank John Hale to generally advertise it."

Keene noticed with what trenchant bitterness she uttered the sculptor's name, but he gave no sign.

"I suppose not," he replied.

"Mr. Hale ought to be here soon."

Again Keene caught himself affected by the woman's tone and remark. The latter was like an invitation for him to press his inquiries—and he accepted it. He drew closer to her, saying in lower tones, yet with semisubdued intensity:

"See here, Miss Bell, I will make it an object to you to tell me who the model was for that figure. I am not here on a false errand, I will admit. I want to discover who posed for that statue. Will you tell me?"

"What do I get for it?" Miss Bell asked, with curious eyes.

"I will agree to any reasonable terms."

"Ah, you are indeed very anxious to learn," the woman laughed tauntingly. "I guess I'd better not tell you unless you tell me why you wish to know."

"I will do that!" exclaimed Keene, with his steady gaze never losing a change of her expressive face. "A friend of mine suspects a lady, the one he is about to marry, of posing as a model, and he resents it very deeply. I've been engaged to verify the fact. You shall have half of what I receive if you will tell me who posed for that figure."

"You're sure you are not lying to me?" demanded Miss Bell, with a sharp glance at him.

"Indeed, I'm not. Will you tell me?"

"Suppose I don't."

"I will bring the young man himself to see the statue."

"Would he recognize it?"

"Possibly, though the face is not that of his fiancée."

An ironical laugh broke from Miss Bell's red lips.

"If the face is not hers, pray how could he recognize her?" she demanded, with scurrilous significance.

Sheridan Keene turned sharp about. There was a step sounding at the foot of the stairs in the adjoining corridor.

"It's Mr. Hale," gasped the woman quickly.

"Then you'll not tell me?" Keene demanded, in a whisper, seizing Miss Bell's white wrists.

She swung around, and looked at him with startled eyes.

"Will you pay me my price?"

"Yes, on your word!"

"Then meet me at Reynolds' ladies' parlor, at two this afternoon."

"I'll be there! Don't fail me!"

"Not I!"

The last was scarce uttered, when the door opened and John Hale entered his studio. He was a man of twenty-five, tall, finely proportioned, and of strikingly grave and earnest countenance. Taken altogether, he was a man who might have won the heart of almost any woman.

"Good morning, Jenny," he said, in a deep, mellow voice; then bowed to Keene, and asked: "Were you waiting to see me, sir?"

But Jane Bell answered for the detective.

"No, Mr. Hale," she said quickly, with a laugh and

toss of her head. "He is a friend of mine, who came down with me this morning. You'll have to excuse me now," she added, turning to Keene and winking aside. "I must prepare for my pose."

Keene took the wink for what it was intended, and bowed himself out of the room.

CHAPTER VI.

A TELEPHONE MESSAGE.

Sheridan Keene did not go down to the chief's office to meet Wade, neither did he relieve Doctor Lawton with a visit. He had no immediate use for either. The scene at the studio, and the suspicions he had formed, had extended the case to its very circumference, and the closing in was a process he best could accomplish unaided and alone.

He did not waste the morning, however. Though he at present could only assume that Tillie Mason had posed for Hale, and that the latter might possibly have had some reason for wishing her to be out of the way, Sheridan Keene resolved to act upon the mere assumption, together with his other suspicions, and he at once sought the neighborhood of the Bay State Road.

He had figured out, in his own incisive way, how such an abduction as he had in mind might have been accomplished; and for an hour or more he devoted himself to visiting the various public-telephone stations in the immediate neighborhood of Doctor Lawton's residence.

In one of these, the last he entered, and which was less than five minutes' walk from the rector's house, Keene made the discovery and acquired the information he had shrewdly anticipated.

The station was one of the company's offices, and a bright young woman was in charge when the detective entered.

"I am one of the inspectors of police," Keene explained, "and I wish you to answer a few questions for me, which may aid me in clearing up a case that I am investigating."

The girl nodded understandingly, and allowed the detective to draw her aside from two operators who were at the switchboard.

"Now, sir, I am ready," she said, smiling. "I will assist you, if I can."

"Thank you," bowed Keene. "And please tax your memory as to the circumstances. Are you on duty afternoons and evenings?"

"Nearly always, sir."

"Were you here last Tuesday evening?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you recall if any lady came in here to use one of the telephones?"

"About what time, sir?"

"That is what I want you to tell me, if you can," smiled Keene.

"Wait one minute, please, till I look over my Tuesday slips," said the girl. "It will take me but a minute."

"Very well."

The detective waited patiently, and presently the girl returned, bearing a slip between her fingers.

"Yes, sir, there was a lady who called here and sent a message," she said. "I remember it distinctly, now, sir."

"And the hour?"

"It was about five o'clock, sir. I was here alone at the time, my assistant having gone to her dinner."

"Can you describe her?"

"Not her face, sir, for she wore a veil."

"Can you tell if she was young or old?"

"She was a young lady, sir, I am sure," the girl quickly answered. "I could tell that by her figure."

"What style of figure did she have?"

"She was quite good size, sir, and very nicely formed. I noticed it at the time."

"Do you remember how she was dressed?" asked Keene, well pleased with the information he was acquiring.

"Yes, sir," nodded the girl. "I can tell you in a general way. She had on a blue suit, I think it was of a light shade, and wore a fur cape."

"Did she wear a bonnet?"

"No, sir. She wore a felt hat, with a rim of blue underneath."

"Oh, yes, that is very good," bowed Keene.

"Is she the person you are seeking?"

"I am not sure yet," he replied. "Can you tell me to whom she telephoned?"

"I can by looking up the number."

"Do so, please."

There was another brief delay, and then the girl reported:

"She called up John Hale, of Boylston Street."

"You are sure of that?"

"Positively, sir," said the girl decisively. "I remember it distinctly, for I was at the switchboard at the time, and was considerably delayed in getting a response to my call."

"Thank you very much," said Keene gravely. "By the way, don't you sometimes hear communications from the closet yonder?"

"Oh, yes; and I did in this instance, sir."

"Better and better!" exclaimed the detective. "Can you tell me in a general way of what the woman's message consisted?"

"It was merely an appointment to meet Mr. Hale that evening, sir."

"Did the woman give Hale her name?"

"No, sir," replied the girl. "She merely stated to him that she was his friend of Beacon Street."

"Ah, yes! Do you know what answer Hale made?"

"I know only that he consented to meet her, and I judged she was pleased," said the girl, laughing.

"Do you know where the lady requested him to meet her?"

"On the draw of the Cambridge Bridge, sir; the upper one."

"And the time?"

"At eight o'clock, sir."

"Was there anything more said that you can now recall?"

"Not that I think of, sir," replied the girl. "That was about all of their conversation, of, at least, the tenor of it."

"Did the woman then depart?"

"Yes, sir; after having paid me."

"And you did not see her face?"

"I did not, sir."

"Then you could not identify her?"

"I think I might know her figure, sir," was the slow

rejoinder. "Yet there are many nicely formed women, and I could not be sure of it."

"That is all, then," bowed Keene. "I am very much obliged to you. By the way, say nothing about these inquiries, please."

"I will not, sir."

It was nearly one o'clock when Keene hastened to the street, and he at once went to the precinct police station near the Cambridge Bridge, where he found the captain at his desk, by whom he was instantly recognized.

"Hello, Inspector Keene!" he said, in greeting.

"Good morning, captain," bowed the detective, as they shook hands. "I've an appointment downtown at two, and am in some haste. I want to see your officer who patrols the Cambridge Bridge after seven o'clock in the evening."

"That's Officer Mahon," said the captain quickly. "He is not here now, but I can have him for you in ten minutes."

"Do so, please."

Keene waited rather longer than the time mentioned, but the officer ultimately appeared, and the detective drew him aside.

"Your beat is on Cambridge Bridge evenings, Officer Mahon?" asked Keene.

"Yes, sir."

"You were on duty Tuesday night, I am told."

"Yes, sir."

"There was an appointment made between two parties to meet there, a man and a girl. They were to meet on the draw that evening at eight o'clock. Did you see anything significant of that meeting?"

The officer thought in silence for a moment.

"I did not see any girl, sir; but I did see a man on the draw, and passed him twice. I thought, then, he might be waiting for somebody."

"Describe him!"

"He was a tall man, dark, with a pointed beard——"

"That's sufficient," Keene interposed quickly, satisfied that the man was John Hale. "Do you know if he met the girl?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know how long he remained waiting?"

"I saw him first about half past seven, sir, and again at eight. I did not see him after that."

"That's all," said Keene sharply. "Much obliged."

Then he shook hands with the officer and captain, and made his departure.

It was nearly one o'clock.

Taking a northbound car, Sheridan Keene now went downtown and devoted a half hour to lunch. Then he hastened to the Reynolds, to keep his appointment with Jane Bell, the sculptor's treacherous model.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TREACHERY OF JANE BELL.

At precisely two o'clock, Keene entered the Reynolds Hotel, and made his way to the ladies' parlor. He was not without some misgivings that the Bell girl might prove false to him, as she had appeared willing to be false to Hale for a remuneration; but, to his intense satisfaction, he observed, on entering the parlor, that the girl was waiting for him in an obscure corner.

She came forward at once on seeing him approach, and joined him almost on the threshold.

"I don't want to be seen here with you," she whispered, with her eyes glowing brightly through the meshes of her veil. "Can't you get a private room?"

"Certainly, if you wish," assented Keene readily.

"I do," she said. "It might cost me my occupation if Hale were to discover that I am not to be trusted."

"Wait here, then, and I'll engage a room and get a key."

"I will wait for you in the side corridor yonder," whispered the girl. "I don't dare meet you again in the parlor for fear some one who knows one or both of us may see me."

"All right," nodded Keene. "I will not be gone very long, and will join you out yonder."

"Very well."

The detective hastened down to the hotel office and secured one of the private parlors, and presently rejoined Jane Bell in the corridor indicated.

"Come this way," he said softly. "I know the location of the room. I asked the clerk about it."

"So much the better."

The girl was evidently nervous. The glow was bright in her eyes, yet her cheeks had grown pale since morning, and even her lips had lost some of their crimson color. But she followed close at the detective's elbow, and he led the way to the room he had secured, and closed the door.

The girl heaved a sigh of relief.

"Order me a drink," she said shortly, throwing off her veil. "I am shaking worse than I did in my first pose."

"What will you drink?" asked Keene, laughing.

"Hot sherry," said Miss Bell, without a moment's indecision. "It acts quickest on me, and I want something that will act quick."

"Why are you so nervous?" asked Keene, pressing the annunciator. "Your life's not at stake."

"Oh, I know all about that," the girl rejoined. "But I have a living to earn, just the same; and if Hale should know of this little episode, there's no studio in town in which I would be received. I guess I know what I am about."

Sheridan Keene decided that she did.

"I shall not betray you to Hale," he said reassuringly.

"I don't expect you will," she replied. "You don't look like that sort of a man; I am rather over the average in taking a man's measure. Yet I am tolerably well known here, and I presume you are, if you are a detective; and it might come to John Hale's ears that we had been seen together here."

"That's true," smiled Keene. "I never thought of that."

"I was a fool to meet you here," added Miss Bell; "but I suggested the first place that came into my mind this morning. Hale entered so unexpectedly that I thought I'd better get rid of you at once, so I said anything that came into my head."

"Oh, I guess we shall be safe enough here."

"I hope so. We are, now, at all events; and we might as well stay here. We'd be done up by going out now, as surely as later."

A knock upon the door announced the arrival of the stimulant which Miss Bell had requested, and Sheridan Keene took the tray from the waiter without admitting him, and gave the girl her drink. She drained the glass

before speaking, and then said, with a loud cluck of her tongue:

"Thanks! That will set me right. Now let's get down to business."

"The sooner the better," said Keene dryly. "That's what I am here for."

He drew a chair nearer that which Jane Bell had taken, but the latter opened the discussion with a businesslike celerity that at once indicated her to be a woman of the world.

"In the first place, where do I come in at the finish?" she demanded, flashing her sharp eyes at the detective, with a searching gaze. "What do I make, providing you get the information you are seeking?"

"Well," said Keene thoughtfully; "you shall have half of what I receive, providing I can prove that a certain girl posed for the figure I saw in Hale's studio."

"And how much is that?"

"Your part will be one hundred dollars."

"Do you get two hundred?"

"Naturally, since I give you half."

"How do I know I will get my half?" demanded Jane Bell, with a rather doubtful squint at her hearer.

"Well, I guess you will have to take my word for it," said Keene, smiling oddly. "Or, stay, I will give you a retainer at once, as they say in law. Here's a twenty-dollar note for the starter, and to bind the bargain. I give you my word that I will give you the balance if your information proves reliable."

The girl took the note, curled it around her forefinger, and then thrust it into the bosom of her dress.

"That's good enough for me," she said shortly, with a mingled smile and leer at the detective. "Now, one thing more."

"What's that?" asked Keene, who never lost the slightest outward expression of the girl's character.

"I want you to promise that you will not betray me to Hale, nor to any other person," she replied.

"I give you my word, I will not."

"Cross your heart!"

"I'll do that," laughed Keene, rather tickled by the occasional levity in which the girl indulged.

"Now order me another drink!"

"And that," assented the detective, rising to comply.

"Now, then, it's up to you, as the saying is," laughed Jane Bell, when he resumed his seat opposite her. "What do you want to know?"

"First, the model's name," said Sheridan Keene, with his eyes fixed on the girl's steadily flushing face.

Jane Bell cleared her throat, as if the betrayal did not come with perfect ease, and answered curtly:

"The model's name is Mason."

"Don't you know her first name?"

"I have heard Hale call her Tillie. I suppose that is short for Matilda, isn't it?"

"No doubt of it," assented Keene.

"Is that the name you expected?" demanded Miss Bell, with a curious smile.

"Yes, it is," Keene replied, nodding. "Do you know where the girl lives?"

"On Beacon Street, I think."

"Don't you know?"

"Well, yes, I know. She lives on Beacon Street."

"Why didn't you say so, then?"

"Because I didn't agree to tell all I know," retorted Jenny Bell curtly.

"You will not lose anything by so doing," Keene replied assuasively. "Are you acquainted with Miss Mason?"

"I should say not!" exclaimed the girl, with a contemptuous toss of her head. "Miss Mason isn't in my class."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that she's one of the swell set. She swims in the same tank with the Four Hundred. You don't imagine, do you, that she has posed for John Hale open and aboveboard? Well, well, I should say not! She always came alone and veiled, on the strict Q T, as it were."

"Is that so?"

"Sure thing! It's my opinion she's a bit stuck on her own shape, and that Hale took advantage of that, and persuaded her to do the posing. Probably she wanted to see herself in marble, and he had no great difficulty in gaining her consent. But it has all been done on the sly, mind you."

"How did you happen to know of it, then?" asked Keene rather pointedly.

"Because I am in and out of Hale's studio nearly every day, and I have two eyes and two ears, which my brains have taught me to use to the best advantage."

"I see," laughed Keene. "You are rather a clever woman."

"I know my business."

"Also that of a few others, I imagine," said Keene dryly.

"Now, what do you know about the existing relations between Hale and Tillie Mason?"

"Well, I am not sure," said Jane Bell evasively.

"What do you think?"

"Well, I think he has been making love to her."

"What leads you to think so?"

"The same old eyes and ears," laughed the girl.

"Are you not sure of it?"

"I said I wasn't; but I am," she now admitted, with an odd smile. "I have listened and heard Hale talking to her, and I know well enough that they are quite as friendly as they ought to be."

"Would you testify to that in court, if necessary?"

"Why not, indeed!" exclaimed Miss Bell, with a shrug of her shoulders. "But I don't want it to appear that I have disclosed their relations!"

"I'll take care to prevent that," replied Sheridan Keene. "You shall not be implicated in any way whatever."

"That's good enough for me, sir."

"Now, what sort of a man is Hale, as you have observed him?"

"Oh, he's good enough in his own way," was the reply. "But he has a devil's own temper when it is roused."

"I see," nodded Keene. "I suppose, if he thought himself in any very serious scrape, he would not shrink from something desperate, would he?"

"I will wager he would not," said Miss Bell instantly. "But there's nothing like that in the wind, is there?"

"Nothing that I know of as yet," replied the detective, shaking his head. "Is this all you can tell me about them?"

"Isn't that enough?" demanded the girl, with a quick upward glance at his earnest eyes.

"Well, it's much better than nothing," was the reply. "I take it for granted that you will say nothing outside about this interview."

"Well, I should say not, sir!"

"I also will keep it secret, then," said Sheridan Keene. "Where can I see you to give you the balance of the money when this has been brought to a head?"

"Anywhere you say."

"You are in Hale's occasionally, you stated?"

"Yes, nearly every day."

"I will see you in the street doorway about noon to-morrow," suggested Keene. "How will that suit you?"

"It will suit me all right."

"Be there at that hour, then, and I will give you the balance of the money."

"All right, sir," nodded Miss Bell, extending her hand. "With that eighty dollars coming, you may count on my being prompt."

"I will not fail you," said Keene shortly. "Do you want I should go out of here ahead of you?"

"Yes, sure! I will follow you presently."

"Good-by, then."

"Good-by."

The detective pressed her hand, smiling down into the dark eyes she raised to his, then withdrew from the room and the house.

TO BE CONCLUDED.

SENTINELS OF THE SEA WHO PROTECT OUR COAST.

A faint splash of light on a dark waste of waters; the wash of the sea against the ship's side; the creak of clockwork; the measured footfall of the watch on the deck; the barely heard throb of a distant steamer, or the near loom of ghostly sails passing in the night; and, through a pall of chilling mist, the boom of the foghorn hurling its note of warning into the far-off silences.

Such, in the long night hours, is one of the many lightships which keep keen vigil around our coasts—the sentinels of the sea, the protectors of those who go out on the deep waters.

To understand the spell of the life, let us step aboard a lightship.

No sooner are we on the deck than we feel at home. Spacious and cosey, one can picture happy hours spent in this craft, remote from the stress of shore life. There are even plants and flowers to give a picturesque touch of the domestic life.

And the men who make their homes here? They are only eight all told—it may be only six—a master and his mate, there sailormen, and three lamplighters; and of this small but sufficient crew only five are on duty—the remaining three are taking a well-earned rest ashore, turn and turn about.

No long-faced hermits are these guardians of our lightship; cheery men, all of them, and hospitable, as becomes a sailor, though they roam no seas.

"Dull?" said the mate of the lightship. "Why, we've no time to be dull! No time for grizzling here!"

And this is the truth. From rising to sleeping, no moment need be unoccupied. The lantern alone keeps two of the five constantly busy. At sunset the lamps are lit, and the lantern is hoisted to its eminence, a few feet below the ball of the mast; then the clockwork is started which sets it revolving. All through the night, at frequent intervals, a gong sounds the signal for the laborious rewinding, and woe betide the watchman who is deaf to the signal or does not keep an eye on his revolving light.

At sunrise the lantern is lowered and a busy hour or more of cleaning follows, with rag, and leather, and cans of oil, until each reflector almost blinds one with its glitter.

Eyes must be kept ever on the alert night and day, the watchers ready at any instant to send a warning signal by gun or flag. It may be a vessel heading for a shoal; a ship in distress; an imminent collision, which only the promptest action can avert. And every happening of night or day must be carefully noted by the master in his log.

But, of course, it is not all work. There are hours of leisure for those off duty. And there is always the prospect of shore leave, which is so welcome when it comes.

No; with a cheerful spirit, plenty of work, and play, and good pay, the life of a lightshipman is far from being undesirable, even in the isolation of a foggy night amid the lone waters of the sea.

USE YOUR LEFT HAND.

Why is it that we neglect to use the left hand so much?

Among English-speaking people, ninety-seven out of every hundred are right-handed when they reach maturity. Out of every hundred such persons, seventeen are born right-handed, three are born left-handed, and the remaining eighty are born without preference as to either hand. Eighty are influenced to become strongly right-handed during early childhood.

No great asset of the world is so neglected as the average left hand. Formerly, all the world was ambidextrous. Primitive man had no preference which hand he used. And in various parts of the world efforts are now being made to revive the use of the left hand.

Japan has for many years been teaching two-handedness to the men of her army and in her public schools. The German government is following Japan's example. Sir Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts, does not consider a man a well-trained soldier unless he can mount equally well on either side of his horse, use the sword, revolver, and lance equally well with both hands.

CLEANINGS.

About forty miles of shelving are taken up by the books in the library of the British museum in London. There are about 2,000,000 at present, and the number increases at the rate of 50,000 a year.

According to the *Telephone Engineer*, glass poles are now being manufactured for telegraphic and telephone work. The glass is strengthened by interlacing and intertwining it with strong wire threads.

Although medical experts believe that at one time or another most children take tuberculosis, hygienic conditions have mended so much in recent years that it is safe to say the tide of consumption has receded.

The profits in diamond mining can be imagined from the fact that the Premier Diamond Company, of the Transvaal, paid last year a 250-per-cent dividend on its preferred stock and 500 per cent on its deferred shares.

Some workmen repairing Nantes Cathedral were overtaken by a shower and pulled out of a lumber room an old cloth to protect themselves. The cloth proved to be an old Persian tapestry worth several thousand dollars.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Owner of Steam-cooked Monkey Demands Damages.

Trial of a damage suit wherein $200,000 is asked of the Northern Pacific Railroad in compensation for the death of an educated chimpanzee has been begun in the United States court at Portland, Ore. The chimpanzee was dead when the box in which it was shipped arrived from Seattle, the owner asserting that escaping steam cooked the unfortunate animal.

A Dangerous Custom.

Declaring bacilli carried by fish responsible for the recent cholera outbreak in Tokyo, the health department recently issued warning against eating raw fish, a popular custom in Japan.

Chased by Armed Motor Boats.

Piracy again has broken out in Philippine waters, according to advices received from Manila, and the Philippine government is taking vigorous steps to suppress it. The pirates are reported to be active in the Sulu archipelago, and the government has authorized the construction of a coast cutter at a cost of $100,000.

The cutter will carry two rapid-fire guns and two speedy motor boats, which also will be heavily armed. The motor boats are intended for use in the pursuit of buccaneers when they seek to escape by sailing their light craft over reefs that cannot be crossed by larger vessels.

Vain and Costly Speculation.

Knowing that a bank examiner was about to discover a shortage in his accounts, Assistant Cashier John W. Sibbon, of the First National Bank, of Manistee, Mich., confessed that he had stolen $44,000 of the bank's money. The directors made up the full amount of the shortage, and Sibbon was placed under arrest.

Sibbon said he began taking the money in 1896 and had lost it in speculation. He had taken nothing during the last three years, he said, and had been able to conceal his speculations.

$3,000,000 for Promoting Harvester Company.

William P. Hamilton, son-in-law of J. P. Morgan, and member of his banking firm, testified that J. P. Morgan & Co. made $3,000,000 out of the formation of the International Harvester Company. In return for promoting the company, the banking firm received $10,000,000 cash and $3,500,000 in disbursements, the profits being the difference of $3,000,000.

The Meanest Man in the World.

The meanest man in the world has turned up again. He gave Reverend Thilo Gore, pastor of the German Lutheran Church, Camden, N. J., an envelope filled with tin foil for marrying him to a pretty girl. The man was so mean that even when he took out the marriage license he gave fictitious addresses for both himself and bride.

The couple rang Doctor Gore's doorbell late at night, and asked him to marry them. After the ceremony was performed the man handed the minister an envelope which was supposed to contain the fee.

After congratulating them, the minister ushered them to the door, then proceeded to open the envelope. To his surprise and chagrin he found it contained several neatly folded pieces of tin foil.

Dictagraph Convicts Slayers.

Tony Aspoli and James Murdock were convicted in New Castle, Wyo., and sentenced to be hanged for the murder of John Giachino. The chief evidence of the prosecution was obtained from stenographers' notes taken from a dictagraph which had been placed, for many days and nights, in the county jail where the murderers were confined.

The men were watched, and when finally they discussed the crime and their chances for escape, the conversation was recorded by the dictagraph. The evidence was admitted by Judge Parmalee, but counsel for the defense gave notice of an appeal, based on the admission of this unusual testimony.

Defines the Early Ages of Mankind.

In an address on "The Relation of Psychology to Pedagogy," President Elsworth S. Lancaster, of Olivet College, Michigan, declared that the "child is a savage" from the age of 5 to 8, "a barbarian" from 10 to 13, and for the first 13 years lives in a realm of the senses—sight and sound—and that new sensations are his delight.

"It is the time," he said, "to teach by object rather than by books. At about the age of twelve the child awakens to an entirely new life. The adolescent period is a meditation, a storm and stress period, during which the child is at times gloomy, impulsive, and energetic."

Mascot Gets $200.

Jerry McCarthy, mascot of the Red Sox, received a check for $200 from Robert R. McRoy, treasurer of the club. With it went this letter, signed by Mr. McRoy:

"In this moment of our good fortune the club wishes to show in some way its appreciation of the many happy moments that your songs have provided, and with this in view the club tenders its check for $200. Just as the Red Sox excel in baseball, so do you excel in the position called mascot."

Jerry banked the check and will use it for a college education.

Aeroplanes on Organized System.

"The great maneuvers of the west," as the French maneuvers are officially termed, are unique in their way, because for the first time aëroplanes are to be tried on an organized system. No longer will the commander in chief be obliged to rely on the reports of the cavalry for their information on the enemy's movements.

An aëroplane can do the work of a cavalry patrol in a twentieth of the time, and in a far more comprehensive manner; and one thing is certain: this new development of military science will have the effect of speeding up war and will give birth to a new school of generals, men of lightning decision, who can decide with intense rapidity what the next move on the great chessboard of war shall be.

The millennium of peace seems almost to have arrived for the horse. He has practically disappeared from the scene on which he has played such a glorious rôle in the past. He drags nothing and he is almost useless for scouting.

The motor trolley puffs along the road, relieving him once and for all from the sore backs of his progenitors, and the aëroplane roaring overhead leaves him hopelessly in the rear if he endeavors to ascertain the movements of the enemy.

Famous Painting Found.

One of Rosa Bonheur's earliest paintings has been found in San Francisco after having been listed as missing for many years. The painting depicts a peasant driving sheep and cattle down a sunken road and bears the initials "R. B., '39," in one corner. It was identified by Miss Anna Blumpke, of San Francisco, a personal friend of the painter. The picture is the property of J. L. Cahill, a painter and decorator, who bought it twenty-three years ago for $60.

In Need of Armor.

Desperate base running has so increased the hazards of the catcher's job that now, defensively, he must combine the skill of the boxer, the swordsman, and the football players.

It is not enough that he is a skilled receiver, that he has a good head and knows how to steady a young pitcher, nor even that he is a slugging hitter.

If he cannot put the tag on base runners there is no place for the backstop in fast company, and to discharge this important duty he must have more than courage. He must have a quick eye, be nimble on his feet, and know how to dodge.

Also he must have all the protection afforded by the modern shinguards and baseball armor.

When Roger Bresnahan first introduced shinguards, with the idea of protecting himself when figuring in those plays at the plate, the thing was ridiculed.

Memories were invoked of the great catchers of the past who stood back of the plate with nothing but fragile masks, having neither chest protector nor shinguards, and boasting only in the way of gloves a little affair with a palm, but no fingers, such as would not even suffice for an outfielder to-day.

Ewing, Kelly, Flint, Snyder, Bushnell, and a host of others stood gamely back of the plate and took the speed of the shorter pitching distance of those days without complaint, and broken fingers told at what price.

But it is a question if in those days there were as many dangerous plays at the home plate. For one thing, there was more hitting and heavier scoring, and, as a rule, one run did not cut as big a figure as it does to-day.

Nowadays it is a kind of superstition that the team that gets the first run will win,

and it merely takes an investigation of the figures to prove how great a number of contests are decided by the slender margin of one tally.

In the old days a single run didn't matter so much, for a team would figure on going in and making a rally for a half a dozen or more.

But the defense had not been perfected to the extent it is now. Pitching was not as good, and scoring was less difficult.

With a run meaning what it does in the baseball game to-day it is small wonder that the players take the most desperate chances on all the bases, particularly at the home plate, where every safe arrival means a run.

Let a man get to first, second, or third in safety and his circuit is by no means completed. There is still a chance that he will be nailed or the side retired before he reaches the plate.

But once he slides, untagged, over the piece of rubber that marks the goal the deed has been accomplished, the run is on the way to the president of the league for placing in the official records.

An Intelligent Cat.

This is the tale of a wise cat that lives in Canastota, N. Y.:

The cat's name is Teddy, and its mistress is Mrs. Clarke. Mrs. Clarke's front door has a push-button bell, which is only about three inches from the veranda railing. One afternoon while a lady was calling upon Mrs. Clarke their conversation was interrupted by a prolonged ring of the doorbell. As if the second caller was impatient the bell rang again and then sounded once more. Mrs. Clarke hurriedly excused herself and went to the door, when what was her surprise to see that all the noisy bell ringing was being done by Teddy. The cat was standing on the porch railing and pushing the bell button with his nose!

Merchants Are Making Elaborate Plans.

British merchants and manufacturers are laying elaborate plans to capture the rich trade that will result from the opening of the Panama Canal, according to Albert Halsted, a United States consul at Birmingham, England, in a report to the bureau of foreign and domestic commerce. Trade organizations are stirring up English sentiment toward the development of trade relations with the western coast of Central and South America, and certain journals have sent representatives to study the situation at first hand.

"It seems to me highly desirable," says Mr. Halsted, "that it should be fully recognized by American manufacturers that British and other foreign merchants and exporters are preparing to increase their trade via the Panama Canal."

Nearly Half Million Given for Education.

Nearly half a million dollars was appropriated by the general education board toward the financial aid of colleges in Central and Southern States, and, for the first time, toward agricultural demonstration work on farms in Northern States.

Of $445,000 voted to educational institutions, the largest single sum goes to Baker University, of Baldwin, Kan., which will receive $125,000. The University of Denver, at Denver, Colo., and Mississippi College, at Clintong, Miss., each receive $100,000; Central College, at Fayette, Mo., $75,000; Lawrence College, of Appleton, Wis., $40,000, and Penns School, of St. Helena, S. C., $5,000.

Within the last few years the board has appropriated $659,700 for carrying out agricultural demonstration work in Southern States, and it voted to extend this work to Maine and New York State, appropriating a total of $9,500 for this work in the two States. The general education board was incorporated ten years ago and endowed by John D. Rockefeller for the promotion of general educational work.

Caught in Big Rat Trap.

The rat catchers, who still continue the fight begun months ago when the bubonic plague broke out in Havana to rid the river front of rats, recently made an unexpected catch. In one of the spring traps they found a four-foot alligator. It is supposed to have come from the shallow water under the wharves.

Wins Respect for Uniform.

A woman's determined struggle, almost single-handed, has brought respect to the uniform of Uncle Sam's soldiers and sailors. Three years ago it was not unusual to see the wearers of the nation's blue escorted from places of amusement as if they were social outcasts instead of the country's defenders.

All this is changing or has been changed, and that it is so is due solely to the unrelenting activity of Mrs. Russell Malcolm MacLennan, of Washington. Through her fight for justice Congress has passed a law which prohibits the barring of uniformed men from places of public entertainment. The law applies to the District of Columbia and to the Territories.

Not content with this achievement, however, Mrs. MacLennan has conducted so diligent a campaign that now a similar statute is on the books of thirteen States. The fight will not stop there, and is being waged in all the other States of the Union.

It has grown to be such a common occurrence that nobody paid any particular attention when a soldier or a naval sailor was escorted to the door of an amusement place. There was nobody to take any interest until this one woman took up the cause.

One evening about three years ago she was attending a performance at a playhouse in Washington, almost within the shadow of the Capitol. Two marines and three soldiers had obtained admittance and paid for their seats. They had hardly appeared when the management interfered. Their money was at once refunded, and between ushers and policemen they were hustled to the street, humiliated in the eyes of the entire audience. The incident stirred Mrs. MacLennan's sense of justice, and she determined that if she could accomplish anything the dignity of the uniform of the United States should not be slighted in the future.

Her first step was to obtain the aid of Congressman Richmond Pearson Hobson, and through him she secured the passage of a bill which forbade just this sort of discrimination. She then formed the Society for the Protection of the Dignity and Honor of the Uniform of the United States, of which she is now president.

The first offense with which she had to deal was in Arizona, then a Territory. She immediately proceeded to gather evidence with the assistance of Captain Duncan K. Major, U. S. A., and presented it to the secretary of war. For a time it looked as if the whole matter would end in talk and apologies, but upon Mr. Stimson's succession to office he presented the case to Attorney General Wickersham, who, in turn, laid it before the president, with the result that prosecution was ordered and the proprietors of the place of amusement who had barred Captain E. O. C. Ord, U. S. A., retired, and Captain Duncan K. Major, U. S. A., from their skating rink were fined $100 for their discrimination against the soldiers.

The President of the United States then issued a statement giving Mrs. MacLennan full credit for gathering the evidence in the Arizona affair and securing this conviction, as well as laying the foundation for it.

New Comet is Named.

Miss C. E. Mason, principal of the Castle School for Girls, in Tarrytown, has received a letter from Professor W. R. Brooks, of Geneva, announcing that he has named the new comet he discovered the Brooks-Castle Comet, in honor of the school. Professor Brooks, who lectures at the Castle School, told Miss Mason last season that he would name the next comet he found after the school. When Professor Brooks finds one more comet he will have equaled the world's record for such discoveries.

German Workingmen Can Hardly Purchase Good Food.

Germany faces a shortage in several important crops and a constantly increasing cost of living, according to a report from Consul General A. M. Thackara, stationed at Berlin.

"In many places in Germany," Mr. Thackara writes, "winter grain has been more or less damaged. Just how much the forced ripening which was caused by the sudden hot weather during July has affected the kernels cannot yet be estimated, but it is expected that, although the crops of winter cereals may not come up to all expectations, yet they will not be poor. Winter rye and wheat have been harvested, but not everywhere put under cover. The harvesting has been attended with difficulties, owing to the ripening of so many crops at once, to the scarcity of farm labor, and, the grain having been storm beaten, to the trouble experienced in cutting it with the harvesting machines.

"Summer grain has been partly harvested and in some localities it has been stored. It has also suffered by being storm beaten, by the forced ripening, and by animal and insect damage. The stand of wheat in some parts of the country is thin. It is thought that there will be a good crop of rye as to quantity, but the quality will not be as good as the previous year.

"The high price of bread," adds Mr. Thackara, "also continues. The barns are filled with the crops of a good harvest and yet the prices of staple products are no lower. The price of meat has gone up within the last few months in many cities, Dresden included, about 10 per cent, without any hope of its growing cheaper. Attempts made by various city authorities to supply sea fish and other meat at reduced prices for the masses have met with little success. In order to accomplish anything

in this direction, it is said that more means would have to be supplied. It is claimed that the high prices are caused largely by brokers. Investigation, however, on this point proves that too little consideration for the risks and expenses of the brokers has been shown.

"In other ways the increased price of living is noticeable. The savings banks accounts show a perceptible falling off in this year compared with former years, a difference between $14,280,000 and $16,660,000. Perhaps savings are not less, but owing to higher prices people are forced to put their principal out at a higher rate of interest in order to meet the demands of present living expenses.

"The increase in prices continues steadily. The average decline in May was not of long duration. The tension between the meat prices in May and June was so strong that the fluctuations in the vegetable market had no effect. The average weekly household expenses for the first six months of 1912 amount to $6.02, against $5.64 in the first half of 1911."

$5,000 Ring Vanished in Waste Pipe.

Somewhere beneath the waters around Manhattan is a $5,000 emerald ring that was given as a wedding present to Mrs. Nellie Grant Sartoris-Jones, the daughter of General Grant. When she was stopping at a hotel on Fifth Avenue, last spring, she dropped it down a waste pipe, and though the sewage system of the building and the neighborhood were carefully searched it was never found. Lloyds Insurance Co., in London, has given it up as lost and has paid the insurance.

The ring was not the emerald of five times that value which was given to her father by the mikado when the general was making his tour of the world, although a report of that jewel's loss was mistakenly circulated.

Suggested Revision of Wrestling Rules.

A number of wrestling authorities are of the opinion that the wrestling rules should be revised—that the toe hold and several other things should be eliminated.

Emil Klank, manager for Frank Gotch, world's champion, believes that it is the game and not the rules that should be revised, or, rather, reformed. One can stand for Klank's argument, but really can't see why the toe hold or anything else should be barred from wrestling. The game is necessarily rough. Take away the toe hold and then we will have the leg hold, the hammerlock, and several other things that are just as tough. The argument in favor of eliminating the toe hold is advanced, according to Klank, merely because it is the champion's favorite way of beating his opponents, and the public always likes to see the downfall of a champion.

In his match with Westergaard, in Kansas recently, Gotch worked without his favorite hold and threw Westergaard twice inside of fifteen minutes. It is true that the champion has won a great number of his most important matches by the use of the toe twister, but it is equally true that he also has defeated many high-class men without ever resorting to those tactics. Gotch does considerable bluffing with the toe hold. In his match with Mahmout, in Chicago, the champion continually gazed at the Turk's feet, and when Mahmout began worrying about his pedal extremities the champion grabbed him around the waist and slammed him to the mat. Mahmout was dumped in a hurry simply because he was paying too much attention to his feet. The same applied to Zbysco. The Pole worried himself frantic before the match trying to develop an antidote for the toe hold, and when he started out in the match he forgot everything else.

Westergaard, however, has felt the toe hold and its deadly work. The champion threw Jess with the foot twister, and it was a month afterward before the Des Moines man could get around without the aid of a cane. Later Westergaard came back and held the champion to a draw in a time-limit match with the toe hold barred, and Westergaard is a bigger and a stronger man than Gotch.

Gained Nineteen Pounds During Brief Voyage.

The odd experiences of a stowaway were told before Magistrate Herbert, and after hearing the tale the court discharged the man, on the ground that he did not have jurisdiction over the case.

The stowaway, Henry Poertner, of 4223 Arco Avenue, St. Louis, concealed himself on the United Fruit liner *Zacapa*. For eight days he remained in the forward hold, feasting on the fruits and wines stored there. He gained nineteen pounds during the voyage, and became so stout that it was with difficulty that he crawled from his place of hiding.

He was about to get off the ship at Colon when he was made a prisoner and brought back to New York on the *Metapan*, of the same line.

Statistics About American Farms.

Statistics with reference to mortgage indebtedness of the farms of the United States are given in a report issued by Director Durand, of the bureau of the census, department of commerce and labor. The report was prepared under the supervision of John Lee Coulter, expert special agent for agriculture.

The total number of farms in the United States operated by their owners, which were mortgaged in 1910, is 1,327,439, while 2,621,288 were reported as free from mortgage. These figures show an increase since 1900 of 17.7 per cent in the number of farms mortgaged, and of 4.4 per cent in the number of farms free from mortgage. The report will show that 58,104 farms were operated by managers—a decrease of 1.7 per cent since 1900, and 2,354,676 farms were operated by tenants, an increase of 16.3 per cent since 1900. No statistics pertaining to mortgage indebtedness were secured for farms operated by tenants or hired managers. It would be practically impossible in many cases to reach the owners of such farms, to ascertain the facts.

The total value of the land and buildings of the 1,006,511 farms for which both the fact of mortgage indebtedness and its amounts were reported was $6,330,000,000, and the amount of the debt was $1,726,000,000, or 27.3 per cent of the value. The corresponding proportion in 1890 as shown in the reports was 35.5 per cent. There was thus, during the twenty years, a marked diminution in the relative importance of mortgage debt on the farms mortgaged, due primarily to the very rapid increase in the value of the land in farms. The average amount of mortgage indebtedness per farm increased from $1,224 in 1890 to $1,715 in 1910, but the average value per farm increased from $3,444 to $6,289, and therefore the owner's equity per farm increased from $2,220 to $4,574, or more than double.

The statistics with reference to the number of farms mortgaged for the past three censuses are not precisely comparable, although nearly so. At the census of 1910 questions as to mortgage debt applied to all farms operated by owners, while at the preceding censuses they applied only to the smaller class of "owned-farm homes," those farms occupied by their owners as homes.

In making comparisons between geographic divisions and between censuses it should be borne in mind that the fact of mortgage indebtedness is not necessarily an indication of lack of prosperity. There can be no question but that American farmers generally were more prosperous in 1910 than at the two previous censuses, and yet in that year a larger proportion of the farms were mortgaged. The proportion of mortgaged indebtedness is higher in Iowa and Wisconsin than in any of the other States, and yet these States are among the most prosperous in agriculture. Although in some cases mortgages are placed on farms because of poor crops or other misfortunes, or because of mismanagement, they often represent an unpaid portion of the cost of the farm itself, or money expended for additional land, or for buildings and implements and machinery and live stock.

Divers Find the "Maine's" Turret Intact.

Divers engaged in the work of removing the shattered remnants of the forward section of the *Maine*, for the purpose of restoring the harbor to its normal depth, discovered the forward turret, intact, containing a pair of 10-inch guns and mounts weighing upward of 200 tons. The turret had been hurled forty feet from its original position.

It had been believed that the turret was lying under the barbette, which was discovered months ago in an inverted position near the side of the ship. The turret lies in thirty-two feet of water and no attempt will be made to remove it. It will be necessary, however, to explode many charges of dynamite for the purpose of sinking it deeper in the harbor bottom.

The discovery was most surprising to the engineers, who thought that their work was practically finished. It will make necessary two months more work, but all the operations connected with the raising of the *Maine* will be completed well within the total appropriation.

The Easiest Hitter.

Baseball men are of the opinion that Heinie Zimmerman, of the Chicago Cubs, is in a class by himself when it comes to free, easy batting of the ball. They declare there is no player in either league who hits with the freedom of action that the third baseman does. They add there are men who bat as heavily at times, but not so consistently and gracefully as the Cub infielder. His style is not imitated by any other player and there is no individual who stands at the plate with less fear.

Pitchers have tried to drive Zimmerman away from the plate by shooting the first and second balls directly at his head. But not an inch would he shrink. Pegging at his head only has a tendency to arouse his

ire, and he steps into the following benders with more determination.

Zimmerman will stand at the plate and dodge a wildly thrown ball close to his head. Then he will walk up on the next ball pitched and swing viciously to show the opposing pitcher that he has not scared him a bit. That is a common occurrence with him.

He wields a bat more easily than any other man in the game, and he can swing it faster. He does not change his motion of meeting the ball at any time, batting a slow, fast, and curve ball with the same swing. He can do this because he is an excellent judge of speed, as he has demonstrated time and again when the twirlers endeavor to baffle him with a slow twister. What makes his work at the plate so graceful is the fact that he does not swing the bat with a stiff arm, as most players do. There is absolutely no jerk to his action of hitting, and therein lies his success.

Zimmerman bats into left, center, and right fields, and is as successful against right-handed pitchers as he is against left-handers. He has set long-distance hitting records in three of the National League parks.

He established for himself the distinction of being the first player to knock the ball into the left-field bleachers on a fly at West Side Park, Chicago. Early in the 1912 campaign he demonstrated his terrific hitting power when he rapped the ball into the bleachers in right field in Pittsburgh on a fly. He is the only one who has done that. It is more remarkable because he is a right-handed batter. In 1910, when he was acting as utility man, he sent two drives over the left-field fence in Cincinnati, and he is the only man who ever accomplished this feat.

Food Prices Soaring.

Just how the cost of living was climbing was illustrated in a special statement by the department of agriculture showing prices paid to farmers for their products. Almost every sort of edible has increased not only since last month, but in the last few years.

Beef cattle, for instance, sold for $4.32 per hundred pounds a year ago—now the farmer receives $5.36. Prices for veal, hogs, sheep, milch cows, honey, milk, and tomatoes have likewise soared.

There are slight reductions noted in values of apples, peaches, pears, beans, cabbage, and onions.

French Academy Takes Measure to Enforce Hygiene.

Much has been written about the recent attempts of the medical authorities of France to impress the public and legislators with the realization that the hygienic conditions in France are the worst of any civilized country in the world. Measures so far introduced have been regarded as the encroachment of the government on personal liberty. Little by little, however, the press has been won over, as editors realize the terrible significance of the statistics of mortality, particularly those of consumption.

A project of law has now been introduced by M. Letulle, secretary of the standing committee of the academy of medicine, which declares that compulsory notification of tuberculosis is necessary in the public interest. M. Letulle demands that in all cases where consumption is established as the result of medical examination, there shall be an official certificate to the effect, and that as the result of such a declaration all prophylactic measures shall, as a matter of course, be undertaken; in particular disinfection of the patient's abode, and his or her isolation to a reasonable degree.

As a corollary, the academy is asked to express its opinion that if notification be made compulsory, it shall be incumbent upon the state to find ways and means of coming to the aid of those whom it brands with the name of consumptive.

Should the foregoing project become a law, there is likely to be a turmoil similar to that which ushered in the association and the separation laws, for the French idea of personal liberty is very curious; it includes the tenet that one's health is one's own concern, and that the state cannot intervene unless requested to do so by the patient.

Season's Work in Big Series.

Neither Larry Doyle nor Tris Speaker, the Chalmers trophy winners of 1912, hit as their admirers thought they would in the series between the Red Sox and the Giants. Speaker rapped .300, which was .082 below his season's batting average, and Doyle clouted .242, which was .089 less than his percentage for the campaign.

Could Tris have batted only against Mathewson, he might have rolled up a stick credit of .417, for those were the figures the Bostonian obtained while facing McGraw's master mechanic. Speaker's average against Leon Ames was 1.000, against Jeff Tesreau .200, and against Marquard .143. He didn't face Otis Crandall.

Larry Doyle found Joe Wood the easiest of the Boston pitchers to hit, making four safeties off Smoky Joe, which entitled him to an average of .400. The New York captain secured two drives off Charley Hall, his percentage against the Sea Lion being .667. Larry nicked O'Brien and Collins each for a hit, having percentages of .250 and .143 against these two hurlers. Bedient he couldn't touch at all.

Bedient wasn't easy for any member of the McGraw outfit, only one player—Mathewson—being able to make more than one safety off him.

Mrs. Cleveland Popular With Princeton Undergraduates.

If the Princeton undergraduates have their way about it the marriage of Mrs. Grover Cleveland to Professor Thomas Jes Preston will take place only on the condition that the Prestons make their home in the college town where Mrs. Cleveland has lived so long and has so endeared herself to the students. This is being talked of all over the campus. In fact, just to show that they are very much concerned over it all, several of the boys went to President Hibben recently and asked if arrangements couldn't be made so that Professor Preston could be given a place on the Princeton faculty. Although they received no definite promise, they feel confident that next fall will see their desires come true.

Professor Preston is at present connected with Wells College, and Mrs. Cleveland is a trustee and an alumna of the same institution. But the Princton undergraduates feel that her long residence among them, and the prominent part that she has played in Princeton affairs have by this time made her more of a Princeton woman than any other.

Feeble-minded Do Not Belong in Public Schools.

Doctor Frank C. Bruner, assistant director of the child study department in the Chicago public schools, holds the view that the feeble-minded children, instead of being placed in special classes, do not belong in the public schools. In an address at the conference on the problem of the exceptional child, held at the City College recently, Doctor Bruner said the training of the feeble-minded does not properly come within their province. The distinction between the exceptional and the feeble-minded child is that with special training the former can be made eventually to do the mental work of a normal person, while the feeble-minded child cannot.

A paper by Henry S. Townsend, district superintendent of schools in Nueva Caceres, Philippine Islands, on "The Education of Backward Peoples," was read. Mr. Townsend expressed the belief that many backward children are not defective, but are exceptional, because they do not correspond in mind and character to our own times.

Aged Rector Defends "Manly Arts."

"Every boy ought to be taught to box and wrestle," declared the Reverend John Gower, the 82-year-old rector of Trefriw (Wales) Church, known locally as "The Sporting Parson," to his Sunday evening congregation in a sermon in defense of the "manly arts."

The aged minister pointed with pride to his own career in the ring and on the mat. He had met thousands of strong men, he said, and had vanquished them all except his two brothers, with whom he brought off draws. He added that he was still an expert boxer and invited any of his auditors who might be skeptical to take him on. The challenge was not accepted.

Would-be Assassin Expects a Light Sentence.

Believing that Theodore Roosevelt does not bear malice toward him, John Schrank, would-be slayer of the colonel, expects to escape with a light sentence. He has confided his expectation to Bernard H. Gottschalk, who occupies a cell near his.

"Theodore Roosevelt is only human, after all," Schrank said, according to Gottschalk. "He was shot and has recovered. Now that it is all over and he has had time for reflection, his better self surely has concluded that I should be pitied and not condemned. When McKinley was shot he showed forgiveness.

"The entire case rests with Roosevelt. I know if he will come here and speak for me, and adopt a broad view of the matter, I will get a light sentence. His word will settle the whole matter. I should think he would come here when the case is tried."

Bible Students Ducked in Lake Michigan.

The faculty of Northwestern University, in Chicago, is investigating the initiation of six Bible students, who were bound hand and foot early one morning, dragged from their beds, and ducked in Lake Michigan. The contemptible initiation was the work of eight fraternity men and the kidnaping took place in one of the dormitories. When the dormitory was raided the defenders

turned the streams of two fire hoses on the "frat" men, but they were enabled to carry off their six victims successfully. A riot call was sent in to the police, but the bluecoats arrived after the "ducking" was all over.

Over 12,000 Serious Blazes in Russia.

More than 12,000 serious fires have been reported throughout European Russia this year. In a report just published by the ministry of the interior it is stated that from 1895 to 1910 there were more than a million fires in European Russia, over 2,800,000 houses were destroyed, and the damage amounted to $750,000,000.

The chief causes of the epidemic, according to the official report, are "carelessness in the handling of fire, which is connected with the great increase of drunkenness."

Strikes Prove Very Costly.

A wage loss of 1,004,635 days has resulted from the ninety-seven strikes which have been called in New Jersey during the year ended September 30, according to the annual report of the bureau of statistics of labor industries which will be made public shortly.

There were 32,344 employees involved in the strikes, the time lost being equal to the labor of 3,349 men working 300 days in the year. The percentage of successful strikes was low.

The total number of strikes considered in the report was 130. Of these thirty-three were satisfactorily settled within an hour or less after they had started, leaving ninety-seven strikes that resulted in more or less extended periods of idleness with corresponding loss of wages.

The results of the eighty-eight strikes that were terminated during the year show that sixteen were successful, nineteen partly successful, and fifty-three entire failures. Thirty-eight strikes, or a trifle less than 40 per cent of the total, were for wage increases; nine of these were partly successful, and twenty-three entire failures.

Daytime Passenger Landing for All Liners.

Doctor Joseph J. O'Connell, health officer of the port of New York, announced that there would be no night dockings in future for the big Atlantic liners, as he considered the health of the nation more important than the landing of 200 or 300 passengers at night instead of keeping them at quarantine until the next morning. Doctor O'Connell said that it was better for his staff of five doctors to examine steerage passengers by daylight than by artificial light.

Owing to the opposition of the International Mercantile Marine Company, the Atlantic steamship lines are still running on the old Southern route, instead of on the short one, to which they should have changed on August 14, and in consequence neither the *Mauretania* nor the *Lusitania* has landed her passengers on Thursday night this season.

Collector Loeb said that he was very glad to hear that Doctor O'Connell had decided to forbid night dockings, as it would mean shorter hours for the customs force.

Freight Cars Suddenly Disappear.

Passenger traffic was delayed and coal and freight traffic temporarily abandoned on the Bowman's Creek Branch of the Lehigh Valley Railroad by a mine cave-in, which swallowed several cars of a freight train.

The engine of the freight passed safely over, but the trainmen, looking back, saw freight cars disappearing. Investigation showed that they had fallen into a mine cave-in twenty-five feet deep.

Several cars piled up in this cave-in, and until the company can fill the hole it will be impossible to open the line for coal and freight traffic.

Airship Unable to Rescue.

The steel gasoline schooner *Osprey*, with a crew of six men, was lost at the entrance of the port of Marshfield, Ore. Captain Jacobson attempted to bring the schooner in over the bar, where the waves were running high, but the wind failed him and his boat was swept down on the jetty. The sea drove across the schooner's decks and the men were carried overboard.

Aviator Christofferson, of Portland, with a newspaper reporter, made two trips over the wrecked vessel in his biplane, but could do nothing.

College Students Attack Professor.

While Professor Tracy E. Clark, of the College of Pharmacy, 265 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn, was holding a written examination in physiology, he noticed Max Mogilewsky, one of his students, engaged in conversation with another student. Suspecting the boy of cheating, he ordered him to leave the room, and, when it seemed that too much time was taken in obeying the command, the professor stepped down from his desk to offer forcible assistance. The other members of the class, enraged, attacked the professor. The examination papers were torn from his hands, and for a time pandemonium prevailed.

Several of the girl students added to the excitement by fainting. So great was the disturbance and so excited were the students that two policemen were summoned to escort Professor Clark home.

Max Mogilewsky, the cause of the commotion, affirms that he was merely asking for another sheet of paper, and had no intention of cheating.

New Features on British Battleship.

The Iron Duke, recently launched and now undergoing the finishing touches, is to have many innovations in battleships. One feature will be an armored deck that is designed to protect it against missiles fired or dropped from airships. *The Iron Duke* will have ten 13.5-inch guns, so arranged that they can be fired as a broadside. The vessel was christened by the Duchess of Wellington, and many notables attended the launching. *The Iron Duke* is of 15,000 tons displacement, which is 1,000 tons less than the *Wyoming* and *Arkansas*, of the United States navy, and 4,000 tons less than the *Texas* and the *New York*, now being built.

Mexican Port Ravaged by Hurricane.

The seaport of Acapulco, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, was virtually destroyed by a severe hurricane. The town of San Juan Del Sur, in Nicaragua, was almost wrecked. The American consulate was unroofed, and the consular records damaged by rain. No lives were lost, but a number of natives were injured.

Several small craft in the harbor were wrecked. The United States cruiser *Maryland*, at anchor there, was not injured, nor was the *Cleveland*, which was cruising in the vicinity.

Telegraphic communication with Acapulco was interrupted. Acapulco is the chief port of call for steamers plying between San Francisco and South American ports. The outer bay is unprotected and is occasionally swept by fierce cyclones.

More Deadly than Trolley Cars.

Wagons were more deadly to pedestrians than trolley cars during October, according to the report of Colonel Edward S. Cornell, of the National Highway Protective Society. Wagons were responsible for the death of 19 persons and injury to 22, while trolley cars killed 16 and injured 48. Automobiles killed 24 persons and injured 112, and one person was killed by a bicycle. Accidents in the streets of Greater New York due to vehicular traffic killed 60 and injured 182.

Outside the city on highways, the following tabulation shows the record:

	Killed.	Injured.
By automobiles	20	31
By trolleys	10	26
By wagons	2	33

Eight wagons and eight automobiles were demolished by railroad trains at highway grade crossings in the State during the month.

A totaling of the figures of children killed during ten months of the year showed 178 for the greater city alone. Of these fatal accidents to youngsters 75 per cent occurred in the boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Who Owns the Shetland Islands?

The Shetland Isles, some of whose inhabitants are alarmed at the prolonged stay of a German warship, were pledged, together with the Orkneys, as security for the dowry of 60,000 florins promised with a Norwegian princess who married James III. of Scotland. This was never paid in full, and the islands remained in Scottish hands. Lord Salvessen maintains that Norway might claim them on liquidating the debt.

The amount due is somewhat difficult to compute. Before the bride sailed 10,000 florins were paid, and further installments came later, although not enough to settle in full. There was, however, a contra account in respect of the balance of the price promised by Scotland for the Isle of Man. So if King Haakon decided to take his islands out of pawn the accountants will have to be called in to settle the amount actually owing, plus 443 years' interest.

Czar Visits Moscow.

For the first time in nine years the Czar of Russia, accompanied by the czarina, their children, and the dowager czarina, went to Moscow recently.

The occasion was the dedication of the monument erected by the czar in the Kremlin to the memory of his father, Alexander III.

All the grand dukes were grouped at the foot of the statue, while the grand duchess occupied a tent close by. The ceremony was as impressive as could be made by the presence of the regiments of the guard and the clergy in their picturesque costumes.

When the czar was crowned he announced that he would erect a monument to "the czar of peace and truth." It was

finished six years ago, but the czar preferred to defer the dedication until the state of the country was such that it would not make the dedication seem ridiculous.

Cultivate Twenty Acres in Six Hours.

W. W. Kaney, a wealthy oil-well contractor, uses his motor car as a "hand" on his twenty-acre apple orchard, near Chanute, Kan. When harvest time came, Kaney turned his 60-horse-power touring car into an apple freighter. When that became too small for the demands made upon it by the five thousand bushels of Jonathans, he got a low-wheeled trailer and coupled it on behind the car.

Last summer, when the ground became dry and hard, the oil man hitched the car to a disk and cultivated the orchard in six hours. Kaney says he can disk fifty acres a day in an open field.

Hard on the Hunter.

Judge J. T. Dickerson, of Edmund, Okla., Republican nominee for United States senator, has a story he is telling to illustrate the great number of officeholders and the scarcity of game in Oklahoma at the present time. He says a friend of his got ready to go hunting, and, after seeing the county game warden and investing in a license, he visited the outlying country, expecting to kill some game.

Finally he saw a quail and was in the act of shooting the bird, when a deputy game warden got up from the weeds near by, and said: "For Heaven's sake, man, don't shoot that quail; it's the only bird in this township, and if you kill it I'll lose my job as deputy game warden."

Traps for Wild Ducks.

In these days, when everything seems to be working together to exterminate the fast diminishing game of the North American continent, one would think that the limit had been reached in the destructive agencies, but a new one has been sprung on the hapless ducks in the Mexican oil fields. Dispatches from Tampico, Mexico, announce the fact that wild ducks are spoiling lots of oil and costing operators thousands of dollars. Incidentally, those ducks who spoil oil die, but the dollar grabbers seem to think little of that side of the question.

It seems that more oil is being produced in this section than there is room for in the tanks. Much of this crude stuff has been confined in earthen tanks of large dimensions awaiting shipment. Migrating ducks coming down from the North take these open pools for small bodies of water, and alight on them to rest. They are unable to distinguish the difference between lakes of oil and water.

After alighting their wings become saturated with the heavy fluid and they are unable to escape. The trapped ducks die in thousands, and spoil the oil. It's too bad about the oil, but the ducks also are spoiled.

There are many conditions in the South, where the great migatory tribes go to spend the winter, that decrease the supply. In their Northern breeding places they are protected. Then they fly South, meanwhile suffering many losses from the guns of hunters, only to be trapped in this manner, slaughtered by market hunters, or perish because of other reasons.

Were these death traps and others of like nature eliminated there would be more ducks for the sportsman's gun, and, with proper protection and large refuge areas the ducks would cease to lessen in numbers. Oil producers have stationed Mexicans around these tanks with guns, to scare the ducks away, but even then they are trapped by thousands.

Another Successful Experiment Toward Prolongation of Life.

Another step forward in Doctor Carrel's experiments looking to the prolongation of life is announced at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Doctor Carrel created a sensation in the scientific world some time ago by keeping a fragment of tissue from a chicken heart "alive" for 104 days.

Now he has succeeded in separating from the body of an animal the heart, stomach, liver, intestines, kidney, and bladder and is having those organs live and functionate under his eyes for 10 hours.

To accomplish this result, the excised organs were placed in a solution, supplied with blood aërated continuously by oxygen pumps and kept at the requisite temperature by an apparatus much like an incubator.

Speaking of the aim of his experiments, Doctor Carrel said:

"If it were possible to transplant immediately after death the tissues and organs which compose the body into other identical organisms, no elemental death would occur and all the constituent parts of the body would continue to live."

Thief Escapes in Stolen Auto.

An automobile thief fleeing in a stolen car was pursued by two motor-cycle policemen, firing at the fugitive, through a South Side boulevard, in Chicago, at a 40-mile-an-hour speed. Strollers, motorists, and nursemaids hastily cleared the road as the stolen machine dashed past, followed by the policemen.

The chase was brought to an end by a freight train, which blocked the boulevard. The thief ran the automobile alongside the moving train and leaped on a freight car. He escaped, the policemen refusing to follow.

Dives for Lost Teeth.

When Elias Bray, a calker in the Riverside shipyard, expectorated from the wharf one afternoon, his false teeth plunged into the Thames River and settled snugly in the mud 20 feet below. Mr. Bray immediately engaged a submarine diver, Richard Davidson, who explored the river bottom for an hour without finding the artificial grinders.

The calker prized the missing molars so much that he has engaged Davidson to continue his search until they are found.

National Insurance in Australia Planned.

The most significant result of the parliamentary discussion of Mr. Fisher's maternity grant bill, which was assented to by the governor, Lord Denman, and has become operative throughout Australia, was the committal of the entire Liberal party to a thorough national insurance policy, following the main lines of Mr. Lloyd-George's scheme.

Mr. Deakin's emphatic recent pronouncements on this subject have greatly improved his party's prospects. The left wing of the Labor party prevents the ministry from consenting to any scheme which embodies the element of thrift. The Liberals intend to pursue a vigorous insurance campaign during the coming elections.

The first payments under the maternity grant scheme was made on November 1.

J. Thomas, the minister for external affairs, in justifying Australia's determined exclusion of all consumptive immigrants, stated in the house of representatives that the Australian climate had no special value for consumptives, contrary to what is popularly supposed.

A Costly Cathedral.

With the completion of funds for a million-dollar group of chapels to surround the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Episcopalians in New York are now waiting impatiently for the finishing of what will be one of the greatest sanctuaries of the world. For years this huge edifice has risen slowly upon Morningside Heights till its enormous proportions are just being realized by New Yorkers. Now that this costly setting of chapels is assured, it is estimated that many millions of dollars will yet be spent before the great group of cathedral structures is complete.

New York Central Places Big Car Order.

The largest single order for steel passenger coaches that has ever been given has been placed by the New York Central lines, and covers the requirements of the several roads. The company has ordered 207 coaches, costing approximately $5,000,000, and they will be built by the Pressed Steel Car Company, the Standard Steel Car Company, and the American Car & Foundry Company, in Pittsburgh and Butler, Pa., with a portion going to the Pullman Car Company, and some smaller concerns.

Trap for a Burglar.

How a burglar walked into a trap that had been prepared for him was told at Birmingham sessions, when Alfred Chandler, commission agent, was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for feloniously entering the shop of Mrs. Henrietta Aaron, pawnbroker, of Colmore Row, Manchester, England.

Prisoner was said to be a professional burglar and a most dangerous man, and had been identified as a man who received lessons in the use of the oxy-acetylene plant after the Vyse Street safe robbery, in which such a plant was used.

In July last he opened a conversation with Mr. Lorie, the manager of Mrs. Aaron's business, and suggested that Lorie should lend him the keys of the premises so that he could make an impression of them. "It won't matter to your mistress," he added; "she is probably insured, and it will mean a thousand or two for each of us." There was $200,000 worth of stock in the strong room.

Lorie communicated with the police, who advised him to let the prisoner have a duplicate set of keys. He did so, and after an impression had been made the prisoner returned them, and it was arranged that he should break into the shop on July 31. The police watched him enter the premises and followed him. As soon as Detective Knowles entered, the prisoner knocked him down with a jimmy, and a desperate struggle took place. The police found a complete set of burglar's tools and keys giving access to every part of the premises.